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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1993
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda
COORDINATION QUESTIONS: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

* A/48/50.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 43/178 of 20 December 1988, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to charge the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) with supervising the development of the programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to report to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in implementing the resolution. Pursuant to the resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/47/212-E/1992/54) to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

2. Following its consideration of the Secretary-General's report, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/170 of 22 December 1992 on assistance to the Palestinian people, in which it, inter alia, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people; expressed its appreciation to the States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that had provided assistance to the Palestinian people; requested the international community, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), taking into account the economic losses of the Palestinian people as a result of the Persian Gulf crisis; urged the Government of Israel to accept de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and to abide scrupulously by the provisions of that Convention; called for treatment on a transit basis of Palestinian exports and imports passing through neighbouring ports and points of exit and entry; also called for the granting of trade concessions and concrete preferential measures for Palestinian exports on the basis of Palestinian certificates of origin; further called for the immediate lifting of Israeli restrictions and obstacles hindering the implementation of assistance projects by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other United Nations bodies and others providing economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory; reiterated its call for the implementation of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the projects referred to in its resolution 39/223 of 18 December 1984; called for facilitation of the establishment of Palestinian development banks in the occupied Palestinian territory, with a view to promoting investment, production, employment and income therein; recognized the need for convening a seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, and, in that regard, suggested to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to consider, in its programme for 1992-1993, convening such a seminar, taking into account the assistance needs of the Palestinian people in the light of the developments in the region; and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

3. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) wrote to the various concerned sources requesting information on the implementation of the resolution. Given below are summaries of the replies received.

4. Any additional information received will be issued as an addendum to the present report. The seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people requested in General Assembly resolution 47/170 and referred to in paragraph 2 above was held in Paris from 26 to 29 April 1993. The report of the seminar is being issued under the symbol A/48/168-E/1993/62.

II. REPLIES FROM THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. United Nations

1. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

5. UNCHS (Habitat) prepared and submitted to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, held at Nairobi from 26 April to 5 May 1993, a report entitled "Housing requirements of the Palestinian people" (HS/C/14/2/Add.1). The report was prepared pursuant to Commission resolution 13/6, which had requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director and in cooperation with the PLO to devise a plan for the implementation of a shelter strategy for the Palestinian people to the year 2000, as contained in the report of the Executive Director on the housing requirements of the Palestinian people, together with the provision of necessary funds.

6. After its consideration of the report, the Commission on Human Settlements adopted resolution 14/9, in which it took note with satisfaction of the report of the Executive Director and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director and in cooperation with the PLO, to take all the appropriate measures for the implementation of a national Palestinian housing strategy in the light of the report of the Executive Director and the recommendations contained therein in accordance with the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, as soon as possible. The Commission also requested the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) to take appropriate measures and conduct consultations with a view to facilitating the training and formation of the required Palestinian technical cadres necessary to secure the national housing requirements of the Palestinian people. A report on the actions taken by UNCHS (Habitat) in implementation of resolution 14/9 will be submitted to the fifteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, to be held at Nairobi from 19 to 25 April 1995.

7. UNCHS (Habitat) is also at present in the process of preparing, on behalf of the Secretary-General, a report on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. The report is being prepared pursuant to Assembly resolution 46/162 of 19 December 1991, which requested the Secretary-General to consider ways and means of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and, pending the exercise of their right to self-determination, to plan for concerted economic and social actions by the United Nations system (see also E/1993/64).

2. United Nations Children's Fund

UNICEF programmes for Palestinian children and women in the occupied territories and neighbouring States

(a) Occupied territories

8. In accordance with its mandate, UNICEF has long been associated with efforts aimed at providing humanitarian support to Palestinian children and women in the occupied territories. For over a decade, its Executive Board has repeatedly confirmed its commitment to the cause of alleviating the situation of these vulnerable children and women by adopting specific programmes for them.

9. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 33/112 B of 18 December 1978, UNICEF began its programme of assistance in 1980 to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Executive Board periodically renewed UNICEF programme support in the territories, and adopted long-term programmes of assistance in 1984, 1988 and 1992.

10. In 1991, the Executive Board, in its decision 1991/15, requested the Executive Director to continue to urgently assess the situation of Palestinian children and women and to provide funds commensurate with the expanding needs of those children and women, and to report to the 1992 session of the Executive Board on implementation. Thus, the 1992-1994 programme of cooperation for the West Bank and Gaza Strip represents part of the UNICEF response to that directive.

11. UNICEF is committed to providing a total of $2,175,000 from its general resources during the three-year period of the current programme and will seek an additional $2,175,000 from specific-purpose contributions from donors, out of which almost $1 million has already been received in the first year, with additional pledges under negotiation.

12. Major objectives of the programme include the reduction of child and maternal mortality and morbidity; the expansion and upgrading of early childhood development activities; improvement in the quality and relevance of education both in and out of school; and the extension of physiotherapeutic and psychosocial rehabilitation services for disabled children. The overall strategy of the UNICEF-assisted programme is to strengthen the implementation capacity of local organizations and to promote cooperation among service providers through joint policy planning, information sharing and implementation.

13. Among more specific objectives of the programme, UNICEF is committed to providing support to 42 local clinics run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to sustain and expand immunization coverage to reach 200,000 Palestinian children, with measures aimed at controlling diarrhoeal diseases; reaching 500,000 mothers and children under the anaemia control project; strengthening the capacity of 200 local clinics to control acute respiratory infections; supporting 500 primary schools; providing training for 5,000 teachers, and also local physiotherapists, social and health workers; providing physiotherapy services to 3,000 children and supporting rehabilitation of children with psychological and social problems arising from exposure to conflict situations. UNICEF undertakes these activities in close

cooperation and coordination with international and national agencies, notably with UNRWA and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

14. UNICEF also implements specific programmes of assistance to Palestinian children and women in three countries, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) Jordan

15. The programme in Jordan with annual funding of $200,000 from general resources and $200,000 from specific-purpose contributions, aims to serve the needs of non-camp Palestinians residing in squatter and poor areas of the Amman-Zarqa region, and other major urban areas of the country. It has become clear that this is the most important UNICEF target group, while the camp Palestinians are reasonably well covered by UNRWA services. As a means of reaching this target group better, UNICEF cooperates with over 40 local and international non-governmental organizations. The programme has three components: child and maternal health, education and the urban family, and is closely linked with and complementary to the main UNICEF country programme in Jordan.

(c) Syrian Arab Republic

16. The programme for Palestinians in the Syrian Arab Republic has the same funding levels as that for Palestinians in Jordan above, and comprises three components: child and maternal health, women's development and early childhood development. While continuing to maintain cooperation with UNRWA and the government agency for Palestinians, GOPAR, a special emphasis is placed on fostering community action and mobilizing the extensive network of non-governmental organizations that exists in the Palestinian community.

17. Health-related interventions aim to sustain and expand achievements in protection against preventable diseases, in control of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections. The women's development project has as its major objectives the reduction of female illiteracy and the increase of women's share in the paid labour force. The early childhood development project continues efforts to reduce trauma and difficulties associated with growing up in a refugee community and to develop basic social and coping skills of Palestinian children.

(d) Lebanon

18. The programme for Palestinians in Lebanon has been approved with an annual financing level of $350,000 from general resources and the same amount from specific-purpose contributions. Sectoral objectives include the reduction of child and maternal mortality, promotion of early childhood stimulation opportunities and facilities, empowering women with education and vocational skills to improve their participation in the economic life of the community, and expanding and improving water supply and sanitation, primarily for displaced Palestinians. The programme strategy emphasizes strengthening coordination between partners of programme implementation, fostering community action through encouraging self-help schemes and mobilizing the participation of Palestinian non-governmental organizations as well as enhancing their implementation capacities.

3. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

19. Work of the UNCTAD secretgariat on assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory during the period from March 1992 to March 1993 was intensified in the four main areas of activity: (a) monitoring and analysing policies and practices of Israeli occupation authorities that hamper economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory; (b) investigating the impact of such policies and practices on main economic sectors; (c) developing the database, including the dissemination of quantitative and qualitative information on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory; and (d) coordinating with, and contributing to, the relevant activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in response to General Assembly resolutions on assistance to the Palestinian people and on economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory. In carrying out work in those areas, close contacts were maintained with Palestine, in addition to consultations with other parties concerned.

20. With regard to monitoring, work was undertaken for the preparation of the eighth report of the secretariat on assistance to the Palestinian people for consideration by the Trade and Development Board at the first part of its thirty-ninth session. In addition to highlighting recent developments in the policy environment, including the continuing impact of the Gulf crisis on the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the report focused on identifying pressing problems and needs and recommending feasible measures for action aimed at reviving the Palestinian economy and improving the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people.

21. Within the context of the intersectoral project investigating prospects for sustained economic and social development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, work was intensified on the preparation of the 25 in-depth field studies covering the main economic and social sectors. Part one of those studies, dealing with an analysis of the prevailing situation, identification of problems and needs, and consideration of measures for immediate action, has been largely completed. Concurrently, the study initiated by the Special Economic Unit on a conceptual and substantive framework to provide guidelines for the preparation of parts two and three of the field studies dealing with future prospects has also been completed, along with a detailed supplement on various technical aspects of the framework. Accordingly, a quantitative framework has been established investigating, under different scenarios, possibilities for the sustained development of the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the period 1990-2010.

22. In accordance with the work plan of the intersectoral project, a meeting of experts, Palestinian and international, which was also attended by representatives of different United Nations agencies and regional organizations, was convened at Geneva from 19 to 22 May 1992 (a) to discuss and adopt the findings of part one of the 25 in-depth individual studies, thus providing a consolidated report on the prevailing economic and social situation in the occupied Palestinian territory along with specific measures appealing to the Israeli occupation authorities, to the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to the international community for immediate action; and (b) to consider the quantitative framework for investigating the future prospects of the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip under parts two and

three of the individual studies. Consultations are now under way with all the directly concerned parties on the outcome of the meeting of experts, on the quantitative framework, and other related aspects of the intersectoral project. It is intended to finalize and issue the report of the experts and the study of the quantitative framework upon completion of the consultations.

23. As part of the requirements of the intersectoral project, work on the development of the secretariat database on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory was intensified. Available statistical series covering national income, population, labour and employment, balance-of-payments and external trade for the period 1968-1987 have been standardized and classified along the lines of the economic time series in use in the UNCTAD secretariat and stored in the computer facilities of the secretariat for future reference. These series have also been issued (UNCTAD/RDP/SEU/6 and UNCTAD/DSD/SEU/1) and disseminated widely, including to research and educational institutions, so as to provide a uniform set of statistics on the economy of the West Bank and Gaza Strip covering the 20-year period 1968-1988.

24. Work is currently under way on finalizing part one of a selected number of the 25 field studies, which deals with an analysis of developments in various economic and social sectors over the past 25 years, problems and needs, and measures for immediate action. Those selected studies will be issued individually as and when finalized.

25. At the request made during the thirty-ninth session of the Trade and Development Board, based on Principle 23 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the UNCTAD secretariat has initiated the preparation of an in-depth study of the environmental dimension of Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and their impact on the economic and social situation of the Palestinian people. The study, which is being prepared within the context of the intersectoral project, is structured to deal with (a) present environmental conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, major problem areas and their bearing on the social and economic situation; (b) present and future areas of environmental concern that are expected to have a growing influence on development prospects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip beyond the year 2000; and (c) policy guidelines and project ideas for immediate and long-term action at the local, regional and international levels.

26. In line with the work programme requirements and the provisions of General Assembly resolutions adopted during the period under review, the UNCTAD secretariat has stepped up its efforts to strengthen coordination and cooperation with the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and with regional and non-governmental organizations involved in work on the economic and social situation of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This has included contributing to meetings, participating in inter-agency discussions and field mission to Tunis and Cairo for consultations and data collection.

4. United Nations Office at Vienna

27. The Division for the Advancement of Women had prepared a report, in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/16 on the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied territory, which was presented to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session, held at Vienna from 17 to 26 March 1993, as a note by the Secretary-General. It describes the present situation of women in the critical areas of family life, economy and employment, education and health, with special attention to psychological well-being.

28. The Commission on the Status of Women transmitted draft resolution VII, entitled "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women", to the Economic and Social Council for adoption. In that resolution the Secretary-General was requested to assist in and review the situation of Palestinian women using all available resources, including missions of experts to the occupied Palestinian territory, and to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution, including recommendations and a programme of action aimed at improving conditions of Palestinian women under Israeli occupation, to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session (see E/1993/27, sect. I). The Division for the Advancement of Women will be responsible for the preparation of that report.

5. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

29. At its sixteenth session, held at Amman from 30 August to 3 September 1992, ESCWA adopted two resolutions on Palestinian development. The first, resolution 184 (XVI), relates, inter alia, to the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people and calls for supporting the secretariat's activities, which include studies, conferences, seminars and workshops concerned with the Palestinian people, giving priority to rebuilding the institutional framework for development.

30. Resolution 182 (XVI) declares the period 1994-2003 a Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Decade for Western Asia. Under the resolution, efforts relating to reconstruction and rehabilitation of development activities will be mobilized. It requests ESCWA to provide technical assistance for the implementation of projects during the Decade for various countries and areas, including the occupied Palestinian territory.

31. ESCWA initiated the implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions by undertaking field missions in coordination with the UNDP office at Jerusalem (Occupied Palestinian Territory). A mission was undertaken by the ESCWA Regional Adviser on Development Issues and Policies aimed at analysing the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and proposing an integrated programme of work for ESCWA. A closer coordination process has been initiated between ESCWA and UNDP/Jerusalem whereby joint activities will be discussed and coordinated. Field visits and ESCWA technical assistance to institutions in the occupied Palestinian territory have also been initiated. A second mission was undertaken to the occupied territory by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/ESCWA to prepare a report

on the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in the territory and to identify priority projects (see paras. 35 and 36).

32. A training workshop and planning and appraisal of rural development projects was organized by the joint FAO/ESCWA Division in collaboration with the UNDP office at Jerusalem. The workshop, which took place at Jerusalem from 26 July to 12 August 1992, was attended by 32 trainees from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

33. ESCWA contributed actively to the discussions of the above-mentioned seminar held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 26 to 29 April 1993. ESCWA gave a presentation to the seminar that centred on ESCWA's recent experience and priority areas and projects related to development assistance to the Palestinian people.

34. Arrangements are being made to carry out the following activities in 1993:

(a) A socio-economic survey on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories;

(b) Building up the institutional infrstructure for development in the occupied Palestinian territories with special emphasis on the development of financing institutions;

(c) Impact of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(d) Promoting employment opportunities in the occupied Palestinian territories. A plan to hold a seminar on the issue is under consideration.

35. ESCWA, in collaboration with FAO, has completed a study on the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in the occupied Palestinian territories. Two field missions to the territories were undertaken by the staff of the Joint ESCWA/FAO Agriculture Division in order to identify and prepare project documents for priority development projects to be submitted to donors for possible funding. The following project documents are being finalized:

(a) Land reclamation and development;

(b) Rehabilitation of deep wells, mainly for irrigation purposes;

(c) Rehabilitation of springs and irrigation canals;

(d) The establishment of a central laboratory for veterinary services.

36. Coordination is being made with the UNDP office at Jerusalem and with FAO to pursue the implementation of a group of agricultural and water resource development projects.

37. Discussions are under way with the Islamic Development Bank for a joint programme of action to support the development in the occupied Palestinian territories.

B. Specialized agencies

1. International Fund for Agricultural Development

38. While IFAD is interested in the operations in the occupied territories, the Agreement establishing IFAD and its rules and procedures unfortunately limits assistance to countries that are members of the Fund. Article 3 (1A) of the Agreement establishing IFAD stipulates that membership of the Fund shall be opened to any State member of the United Nations or of any of its specialized agencies, or of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition, article 7 (1B) of the same document states that financing by the Fund shall be provided to developing States that are members of the Fund or to intergovernmental organizations in which such members participate.

39. IFAD looks forward to being able to extend assistance in the near future to the Palestinian people in line with its mandate.

2. International Labour Organisation

ILO technical activities for the benefit of workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories

40. ILO has had a technical cooperation programme for the Arabs in the occupied Arab territories since 1980. This activity is in response to a request from the International Labour Conference to the Governing Body and the Director-General of the Office to provide all types of assistance and support to Arab citizens in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories to strengthen their economic and technical capabilities and to counteract the effects of the Israeli occupation and settlement policy. Funds from the Organisation's regular budget for technical cooperation have been allocated to projects in the occupied territories.

41. The technical cooperation programme is prepared and updated in line with the needs indicated by the beneficiaries themselves. To define those needs, the exchange of views that takes place during the missions sent each year by the Director-General to Israel, the occupied Arab territories and the Arab countries of the region are taken into consideration. All the parties concerned are consulted, as well as the PLO, in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly concerning assistance to the Palestinian people. In addition, the discussions held at inter-agency and other meetings concerning economic and social assistance extended to the Palestinian people under the auspices of the United Nations are taken into consideration.

42. Under inter-agency agreements, ILO is able to collaborate in implementing its programme with UNDP in East Jerusalem to carry out its programme of assistance to the Palestinian people. This collaboration takes two forms: ILO may provide UNDP with experts for UNDP projects being carried out on the spot or, in the case of an ILO project, UNDP takes on the practical coordination and provides its good offices vis-à-vis the Israeli authorities and its knowledge of the area. So far, and since 1980, this collaboration has always been efficient and productive, and it meets with the satisfaction of both agencies.

43. The current ILO projects cover trade union training and vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped. Other projects are now in the pipeline, mainly a series of seminars for Palestinian employers, including chambers of commerce and industry. Concerning trade union training, ILO held three courses for some 30 participants in Nablus, Bethlehem and Gaza in April-May 1992, and similar arrangements have been made for 1993.

44. The project concerning the vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped, organized jointly with UNDP and UNRWA, began in October 1991. Three consultants were sent for a period of six weeks to hold specialized vocational training seminars for personnel responsible locally for vocational rehabilitation and training as well as placement of the handicapped. This project is to be implemented over a three-year period and is continuing in 1993.

45. A continuation of the activity is foreseen in other areas of competence of ILO in which its expertise and experience can be useful - such as vocational training - and there are plans to continue consultations to determine other needs, such as those of small enterprises. ILO attaches considerable importance to the extension of its technical cooperation programmes to assist the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. It is to be hoped that circumstances will allow for the further development of the programme.

3. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

46. While the general scarcity of financial resources still prevails, UNIDO approved two projects in late 1992:

(a) Technical advisory services ($49,000) from its own resources (Industrial Development Fund), to allow provision of services to the industry in the occupied territory at short notice;

(b) Training programme for small industries ($180,000), under a trust fund from Japan to be carried out in September 1993, where preparatory work has been completed.

47. It is hoped that the renewed effort of UNIDO, though modest, will further bear fruit in the future.

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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Effective mobilization and integration of women in development

Note by the Secretary General

1. In its resolution 46/167 of 19 December 1991 on women, environment, population and sustainable development, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in the report on effective mobilization and integration of women in development, to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session, a section on the role of women in environment and sustainable development.

2. In view of the complexity of the issue and the many different aspects to be covered by the report, extra time has had to be allowed for its preparation in order to take into account relevant input from the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to be held from 14 to 25 June, the recommendations from the preparatory process for the International Conference on Population and Development, and the results from the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993. For this reason, it is not possible to present the report to the Economic and Social Council, but instead it will be submitted to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The present note provides an outline of the report to be submitted.

3. The report will outline its mandates and objectives, as well as key concepts such as sustainable development, gender, gender perspective and gender analysis. The main objective of the report will be to illustrate why and how gender analysis should be incorporated in the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 21. 1/

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* E/1993/100.

4. The second section will analyse the role of women as it appears in Agenda 21 and its implications for sustainable development. The report will focus on such aspects as (a) how the relation between women and the environment is perceived in Agenda 21, (b) the places where women are mentioned, whether in relation to global or specific problems, developed or developing countries, rural or urban areas, and (c) whether women are "mainstreamed" in the document or seen as a specific group, and whether they are perceived as active or passive. Among the conclusions considered likely to be made in this section will be that Agenda 21 should be seen as a starting-point and a recognition of the importance of linking the achievement of sustainable development to the participation of women, but that Agenda 21 in its present form may not express this with sufficient clarity since the link between the role of women and sustainable development has been defined in Agenda 21 without challenging the established unequal gender structure. The question will be asked, for this reason, whether goals and guidelines, as outlined in Agenda 21, are likely to be achieved.

5. It will also be concluded that gender relations determine the status of women and their relation to environment, resources, reproductive life and family, and that sustainable development cannot be achieved unless the status of women is raised and gender relations taken into account. Women are related to environment in a specific way, because of their reproductive and community managing roles.

6. The third section will provide three concrete examples in order to illustrate the relation between gender and sustainable development and the way in which gender analysis can be applied to identify obstacles to sustainable development and strategies to achieve it.

7. The first example will be that of poverty and gender, which will illustrate the links between the lower status of women, the feminization of poverty, and the environment, through an examination of the roles of women as managers/users of resources and as producers in the subsistence sector. Two interacting key interventions will be discussed: how measures taken to increase the status of women could reduce poverty and environmental degradation; and how measures to reduce environmental degradation could contribute to lowering levels of poverty.

8. The second example will be urbanization and gender and will illustrate how women in urban areas, in their efforts to manage their families and their neighbourhoods and surrounding environment, struggle to compensate for the lack of social services. Such efforts form part of women's reproductive role, which is a gender role assigned to them by society. However, their reproductive work fails to be recognized as work per se, as opposed to men's productive work, although women make up the support structure which enables men to look for paid jobs. In combination with women's lack of education as a direct result of their lower status, reproductive work effectively reduces women's ability to take advantage of economic opportunities. The double burden of women (reproductive work frequently combined with badly paid, labour-intensive, productive work) locks women into dependent positions and prevents them from fully participating in the development process. At the same time, urban governments frequently make it difficult for poor women in urban areas to improve their living situation and the environment by, for example, failing to assist in improving housing or facilitating access to clean water and by illegalizing the collection of wood

for fuel. So far, the activity of sustaining life, mostly carried out by women, has been accorded low social and economic importance in the development of urban areas.

9. In the last example, the issue of gender and family planning programmes will be illustrated. It will be argued that family planning programmes have had a tendency to operate in a "gender vacuum", that is, they have been focused only on women and their fertility, thus ignoring the links to men, gender roles and society as a whole. Contraceptives have been developed mainly for women and have sometimes given without proper information about their proper use and the range of available prevention methods. It will be argued that, in order for family planning programmes to be effective and compatible with human rights and women's and men's self-dignity, family planning programmes should be directed both to men and to women and carried out jointly with measures to raise the status of women and policies for distribution of resources. These programmes should be directed to men and to women, and they should be based on an analysis of the existing gender system in order to identify the appropriate measures that need to be taken to make this system more equitable, thereby empowering women and men to gain control over their fertility and share the responsibility for the upbringing of children.

10. In a final section, conclusions will be drawn from those discussions and analyses. The chapter will be entitled "Measures to include a gender approach in Agenda 21". The discussion and the identification of measures in this chapter will to a great extent draw upon draft resolution IV on women, environment and development from the report of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see E/1993/27, sect. I), which will be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1993.

11. Finally, the report will make concrete recommendations on means of integrating a gender approach in the development of policies, programmes and the monitoring of Agenda 21, and suggestions on factors that can be taken into account in the review of Agenda 21, which is to be carried out by the Assembly in 1997.

Notes

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8), resolution 1, annex II.

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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 44/78 of 8 December 1989, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with Member States, a report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas and submit it to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council.

2. The General Assembly also called upon Member States to make use of the report and the main conclusions and recommendations of the International Seminar on Women and Rural Development: Programmes and Projects, which was held at Vienna from 22 to 26 May 1989 (see A/44/516, annex), and to endeavour to reflect them, as appropriate, in national development strategies, paying special attention to: (a) setting up or strengthening national machineries for the advancement of women; (b) identifying and formulating more comprehensive priority development projects aimed at improving the situation of rural women and integrating them into national development plans at all levels; and (c) taking measures to give rural women broader access to material and financial resources, to promote the establishment and strengthening of associations of rural women.

3. Measures to improve the situation of women in rural areas have been discussed subsequently in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In its resolution 47/174 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly, recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/64 and 1992/53, welcomed the adoption of the Geneva Declaration for Rural Women by the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, held at Geneva on 25 and 26 February 1992. Those discussions have been taken into account in the preparation of the present report.

4. In order to consult with Governments on the issue, a note verbale was sent to all Member States on 25 November 1992. The replies received from Member States 1/ have also been incorporated in the present report.

5. Recognizing that women living in rural areas are often critical contributors to the family's food supply, this report aims to analyse recent trends in rural development policies, with particular attention to developing countries, in order to identify the causes of successful implementation of rural development strategies that have contributed to an improvement of the situation of rural women during the past decade, and to analyse unsuccessful projects and explore the reasons for their failure. In the analysis of recent trends, three crucial elements of rural development strategies are examined: (a) building/strengthening institutional support; (b) human resources development strategies; and (c) implementation of measures which would give rural women broader access to and control of productive resources.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF RURAL WOMEN

6. One of the most disturbing trends is a sharp increase in the incidence of poverty among rural women. There is a growing awareness that poverty has a significant gender dimension, which helps to explain why and how the situation of women and men differ in rural areas. Integration of gender concerns in the

planning process would help policy makers at all levels better to understand the different experiences of women and men. Unless those differences are taken into account in the process of policy making and implementation of programmes and projects, the causes of poverty and disadvantaged conditions of rural women cannot be adequately understood or dealt with.

7. Women, particularly those who are resource poor and living in rural areas, tend to be doubly disadvantaged because of their dual need to earn a living and to provide care for their family members, given that these tasks are not equitably shared. Faced by formidable barriers to access to other productive resources, their labour is the single resource at their disposal. However, women in rural areas tend to have little control over the uses of their own labour, owing to non-reciprocal labour arrangements with male family members, subsumption in male-controlled production processes, norms that restrict their access to paid labour, and a smaller cash income relative to that of men and hence the inability to hire labour. These factors, taken together, tend to make their work invisible to family members, and to society as a whole. Invisibility of rural women's work indirectly exacerbates the existing gender inequality at the household level, contributing to an intergenerational transmission of poverty and deprivation, thus perpetuating a vicious circle.

8. Microlevel policies directed at changes within the household, such as those intended to increase women's access to credit and to income-generating activities, should be based on macrolevel changes in the society as a whole. A recognition that gender inequalities within the household are linked to gender inequalities at the societal level has important policy implications. It suggests that, in order to bring about a sustainable improvement in the situation of rural women, institutionalized inequalities between women and men at the societal level must first be addressed, such as those to be found in the legal system and in the occupational and wage structure.

9. All individuals, women jointly with men, should have a voice in the social demands with regard to the allocation and use of resources. In order that women, particularly those living in rural areas, benefit from the process of development, it is necessary to ensure that they are given equal opportunities to participate in the process. In that respect, empowerment of women, through the elimination of the gender-based social structures and relations that constrain women, becomes an important issue in the formulation of national and international development strategies.

10. In the past, the bulk of assistance to rural women was in the form of public goods such as health services, education and family planning, which often implied an assumption that women are passive dependents of the State. A first step towards sustainable improvement in the situation of rural women is a change in the concept of public programmes. It is essential that Governments and the international community concerned with rural development incorporate gender issues into the formulation, design, planning and implementation of their policies and programmes, which includes the recognition of women as principal economic actors.

11. Integration of the concerns of rural women into development goals lies at the core of any strategy that seeks to improve the situation of rural women. Incorporation of gender issues into national planning requires cooperation

between Governments, national machineries, women's groups, non-governmental organizations and the international community.

12. During the Third United Nations Development Decade (1981-1990), which was characterized by a widespread imposition of structural adjustment programmes, the capacity of the State to influence the distribution of goods and services was significantly reduced. This had negative effects on the lives of many people in the developing world, particularly the rural poor. For example, in the 1980s, social spending was reduced proportionately with total public spending, but real government spending per person declined in about two thirds of the countries of Africa and Latin America. 2/ Much of this reduction affected subsidies that were received implicitly through State-financed education, health care and housing, and their reduction affected the poor more, as those subsidies constituted a higher proportion of their income than of the income of those who were better off. 3/

13. Women, particularly those who are resource poor and live in the rural sector, do not enjoy the same relation to their own labour as men do. First, the sexual division of labour decrees certain types of work, such as caring for the other members of the family, to be the social obligation of women. Secondly, rural women's relation to their own labour tends to be conditioned by their relation to men. The structure of gender relations gives men the social power to set limits on the type of work that women may undertake. Moreover, women may not even be able to control fully the fruits of their own labour, which may be appropriated by the male members of their families.

14. There are several links between this situation defined in gender terms and the role of the State. The most complex - and the most critical - for women in general and rural women in particular is the collectivity of norms, laws, ideologies and patterns of action that shape and define societies. One of the key functions of the State is its ability to redefine priorities and form and reform social patterns.

15. Since rural women cannot break out of the vicious circle of poverty on their own, policy makers should take more visible responsibility for improving the situation of rural women by integrating their concerns into national development policies and programmes with particular attention to placing a higher priority on budgetary allocation related to the interests of rural women; strengthening national machineries and establishing institutional linkages among organizations at all levels that are concerned with rural development; improving accessibility of rural women to productive resources, if necessary through reviews of and changes in legislation that constrains rural women's full participation as partners in and beneficiaries of development; and investing in the human resources of rural women, particularly through health and literacy programmes.

16. Increasing awareness by rural women of their rights is an important factor in obtaining sustainable improvement of their situation. Because law-making and adjudication are the result of political processes, increased awareness by women of their rights and knowledge of the legal system, which is termed legal literacy, can help prepare women to participate in those processes. Legal literacy, by developing rural women's capacities to assess the law critically and to interpret the meaning of their rights, helps give them the necessary

political skills to assert those rights and mobilize themselves to remove the substantive and structural obstacles.

17. This also implies that in reviewing legislation to make fundamental women's rights and freedoms justiciable, Governments should consult with women's groups concerned with rural development to allow rural women to define priorities for the content of legal reform. Areas of particular relevance to rural women include family and personal status, land reform, employment, and violence against women.

18. Development of human resources is a crucial part of any strategy that aims to integrate rural women in particular into the process of development. Human resources development should go beyond the issue of human capital formation, in which inputs of health and education services, and of food, are transformed by individuals into saleable assets such as energy and skills, to encompass the reproductive activities of women, for which they receive no monetary compensation. Recognition of women's reproductive role by policy makers is of particular relevance in rural areas where women perform the bulk of the activities that ensure the reproduction and care of the household and community, including child care, health care, food preparation, fuel and water collection and home maintenance.

19. A concept of development that aims to take equally into account the needs of both women and men must therefore address the process of human reproduction as well as the production of commodities and explicitly demonstrate the way the two are interlinked. 4/ The main policy implication of this is the recognition that, to integrate gender analysis at the macroeconomic and sectoral levels of the economy, it is necessary to consider how these abstract categories are linked with the sexual division of labour and income at both the household and societal levels.

20. The evaluation in the present report of programmes and projects implemented in the rural sector in developing countries strongly indicates that gender inequalities within the household are linked to gender inequalities at the societal level; this is manifested by lack of access to both the factors and the means of production and by an unequal wage and employment structure. For example, the invisibility of women's work or difficulties in measuring it in the informal sector indirectly exacerbate the existing gender inequality at the microlevel by devaluing women in general and female children in particular. This has important policy implications: the economic importance of rural women's activities must be fully recognized. Increasing women's access to wage work, for example, without modifying institutionalized inequalities between men and women in the occupational and wage structure in the field of legislation, education and training, which prevent women from controlling the factors of production to which they may have access in theory, is unlikely to lead to self-sustaining improvement in the situation of rural women.

21. Elderly rural women are identified in the present report as a particularly underprivileged sub-section of the rural population, in terms of paucity of material resources and lack of education and training. Changing demographic structures in developing countries, such as declining mortality, have increased the number of elderly rural women dependent on their families for support, while the increase in the elderly population and the migration of males into urban centres have led to a substantial decrease in the availability of family support

for the elderly females. The analysis set out in section III below indicates that investment in human resources, including recognition of the reproductive activities of young rural women, is the best preventive measure to potential social challenges that may arise out of socio-economic or demographic changes. In order to achieve sustainable improvement in the situation of rural women, policy makers must fully commit themselves to investment in the human resources of the rural female population from birth onwards, adapted to each successive generation and designed to support women throughout their life cycle.

22. Coherent and consistent policy depends on effective cooperation between different levels of policy-making bodies. While it is the central policy maker's role to set minimum standards and conditions for a fair social environment, including rules against discrimination, institutional linkages determine, to a great extent, the success or failure of the translation of those policies into practice. The establishment or strengthening of institutional linkages among the external aid agencies, women's national machineries, other governmental and non-governmental institutions and local rural development institutions, particularly at the grass-roots level, is an important step towards enhancing local capacities. Emphasis could be placed on grass-roots, community-based institutions, which are more accessible to rural women than larger, local or national organizations, and on developing women's leadership skills and ability to voice their demands in public arenas.

23. Experience has demonstrated that the programming and implementation of agricultural projects is carried out most effectively by ministries of agriculture assisted and monitored by special women's units or focal points. To ensure that rural women are integrated into, and benefit from, national development policies and programmes, it is important to establish the units at those provincial and district levels that would link national machineries at the central level with rural women at the grass-roots level. Those machineries should monitor the status of rural women and facilitate the work of non-governmental organizations and government departments, particularly in formulating legal literacy programmes for rural women and in food production, income-generating activities and increasing their access to productive resources.

24. Training for staff in gender issues should be an integral part of the programme to strengthen national machineries and establish institutional linkages with rural development institutions. The integration of gender issues into the planning process would enable policy makers to clarify fundamental concepts relating to gender by identifying the daily tasks of women and men and differentiating between their productive and reproductive activities.

25. Programmes and projects for women, particularly in rural areas, should be viewed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. Women's contribution to the agricultural economy is essential to both food security and rural development. Programmes and projects aimed at improving the situation of women in rural areas, therefore, should be part of the overall development plan of the Government, particularly in developing countries.

III. TRENDS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: REVIEW AND APPRAISAL (1980-1992)

26. Despite the growing awareness of Governments of the need for strategies and programmes to improve the situation of rural women, only a few countries have initiated significant policies and programmes at the national level that specifically target rural women for participation and benefits. A careful review of policy, programmes and projects concerned with rural development in the past decade shows that there are lessons to be learnt from both success and failure. Some of those lessons will be examined in this section.

A. Progress in the establishment of women's national machinery for integrating women in rural development

27. The establishment or strengthening of women's national machinery should lie at the core of rural development strategies. National machinery is defined as any organizational structure established with particular responsibility for the advancement of women and the elimination of discrimination against women at the national level. Such structures have usually taken the following forms: (a) ministries or under-secretaries of State for women's affairs; (b) units located in or affiliated with ministries dealing with labour and social affairs; (c) units located in or affiliated with ministries dealing with agriculture and economic planning; (d) advisory bodies such as women's bureaux, national councils or national commissions; and (e) women's wings or units affiliated to the national ruling party.

28. With the exception of the national machinery located in or affiliated with ministries of agriculture, however, attempts by most national machinery to implement food and agricultural development programmes and projects for rural women have generally met with, at best, very modest success. The main reasons are insufficient human and financial resources, the lack of a country-wide network of regional or local branches and, especially, scarcity of technical expertise. 5/ This lack of expertise contributed to the low status of women's national machinery among other government agencies and to the isolation of separate women's units from the programmes and field activities of the sectoral ministries.

29. The net result was for such national machinery to design and implement small income-generating projects, principally in what are considered the main activities of rural women, such as vegetable gardens or small-scale livestock production. They did not address rural women's needs with regard to their primary agricultural responsibilities in food production. That approach, therefore, has generally been inadequate in providing rural women with a regular, sustainable and significant income.

30. In order to strengthen national machineries so that women's concerns are adequately addressed, it is first necessary to ensure the participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

1. Increasing the participation of women in the decision-making process

31. It has been recognized that the significant contribution of women to their national economies has been underestimated and undervalued. One of the main reasons for the weak performance of women's national machinery is the absence of women in the decision-making process at all levels, grass-roots, local and national. The latest available data indicate that only 3.5 per cent of the world's cabinet ministers are women, and men maintain their dominance in such key areas as defence, economic policy and political affairs in all regions of the world. 6/ Few women head agriculture ministries.

32. In many countries, a starting-point has been to identify clearly the obstacles to women's participation in decision-making at all levels. The next step has been to increase public awareness about rural women's rights. Several organizations of the United Nations system, in collaboration with national Governments in developing countries, have been active in promoting awareness of women's rights among the rural population through the mass media, by means, for example, of educational radio programmes. There has also been a growing recognition among policy makers at all levels that improving the economic condition of rural women can bring about an improvement in their status that would, in turn, lead to their enhanced participation in decision-making at all levels. Another method used in many countries was to make available for rural women time-saving technologies that enabled them to devote more time to social, educational and political activities.

33. The project activities of a number of organizations of the United Nations system include the integration of women's issues in national development plans, policies and programmes, and upgrading women's capability in decision-making, project preparation and evaluation. For example, projects implemented by some regional commissions include improvement of the legal and institutional framework to facilitate the incorporation of rural women in all stages of development. 7/

34. Although some progress has been made, through access to local groups and organizations, by the Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system, the representation of rural women in political parties, governmental posts and people's organizations has not been adequate to ensure that they fully benefit from the development of their communities or nation. Much still needs to be done. Increasing the participation of rural women in the decision-making process is a crucial part of rural development strategies, but it is only part of the development process towards improving the situation of rural women. Increased participation of women in community-based activities and the strengthening of institutional linkages among organizations concerned with rural development remain two of the most important components of any rural policies that aim at improving the situation of women.

2. Increased community-based participation

35. The lack of an effective implementation mechanism at the grass-roots level has been identified as one of the main reasons for the failure of programmes and projects that attempted to increase the income-earning potential of rural women. Formation of groups for women as well as mixed-gender groups is an effective

method for increasing women's role in decision-making and ensuring recognition of their participation in the community. Community development organizations at the grass-roots level and mutual aid societies are particularly effective. Such groups not only increase rural women's visibility at the local level by representing and safeguarding women's right to participate in community decisions, but also enable women to learn management skills and methods for earning and saving income.

36. Women in groups often have more bargaining power than individual women in requesting access to land, credit, agricultural services, extension and training. For example, in some countries in Africa, national women's groups are in the process of establishing branches in rural areas while existing rural organizations are strengthening their links with national associations. A few countries in Asia have established a network of organizations, including credit and savings unions, at the grass-roots level which specifically address the causes of rural poverty and organize rural women collectively. In a few countries in Latin America, women's non-governmental organizations are particularly active in assisting peasant women in marketing and in improving their conditions through education and self-help organizations.

37. Action is needed in three main fields to ensure increased participation of rural women in the community, namely (a) promotion of the establishment of women's and mixed-gender local organizations such as cooperatives, farmer's self-help associations, and credit and savings unions; (b) promotion of training programmes for women's associations and enhancement of their capacity for dialogue and negotiation; and (c) encouragement of women leaders to undertake community actions and collective initiatives, particularly in agriculture, forestry and communal fish farming.

3. Institutional linkages

38. Appropriate institutional linkages are essential for ensuring the success of rural development policies. The women's national machinery, located in or affiliated with ministries of agriculture, as a centralized government planning agency responsible for rural development policy-making, has a crucial role to play in the coordination and strengthening of institutional linkages, particularly with agricultural and rural development institutions.

39. One of the main objectives of the projects funded by several organizations of the United Nations system is institution building and staff training. In some African countries, specific projects were implemented whose main purpose was to strengthen the women's national machinery in order to improve the capacity of those institutions to execute, coordinate and apply research on women's employment, health and legal status. A joint project of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, in a francophone African country involved strengthening the capacity-building of the nationwide women's organization to promote the status of women. 7/

40. It should be borne in mind that a comprehensive rural development strategy would require massive amounts of funds, particularly at the initial stages. Funds are needed for the administrative reforms required to establish the system of institutional linkages referred to above, as well as for the upgrading of

existing institutions themselves, for example by recruitment of qualified staff and investment in research facilities. Although the Government is perceived to be the obvious provider of funds, in the case of most developing countries it seems unrealistic in these recessionary times to expect the Government to be the only source of funds.

41. The international organizations and donor agencies concerned with rural development could have a crucial role to play in furthering the process of improvement of the situation of rural women, particularly in developing countries, by providing at least some of the funds as well as the necessary expert advice. More importantly, they could be catalysts in establishing linkages among the main institutions which deal with rural development, including grass-roots organizations.

42. The provision of policy advice to Governments on the planning of programmes and projects to address both women's and men's specific concerns in the rural sector is taking on an ever-increasing importance in the work of the organizations of the United Nations system and of the international donor agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned with rural development.

B. Gender analysis

43. Policy makers are increasingly using gender analysis. This reflects a broader concern with women's roles and responsibilities in relation to those of men, since gender analysis examines both female and male roles within their social, political, economic and ecological environments. A major advantage of gender analysis is that it promotes an improvement in the situation of women and men, thus undermining the argument that programmes and projects concerned with improving the situation of women tend to overlook the needs of men. Moreover, gender analysis can easily be applied to development projects.

44. The main objective of gender analysis is to clarify fundamental concepts relating to gender and sustainable development, including environment and planning. This involves identifying the daily tasks of men and women in developing countries and differentiating between their productive and reproductive activities.

45. The poor integration of gender issues into national development plans arises from the way in which development is conceptualized and public policy is analysed. Even broad concepts of development, which include improvements in social indicators such as reduced infant mortality and increased life expectancy and school enrolment, remain based in the production of commodities. The process of human reproduction, including the raising of children, nursing of the sick, caring for the old, collection of fuel and water, preparation of food, and the general maintenance of the home is left out of account. This is of particular relevance for rural women in developing countries since their share of reproductive work tends to be greater than that of urban women and women living in industrialized countries. A critical issue for women in general and for rural women in particular is how reproductive work is articulated with access to an income. Generally, reproductive work does not include an entitlement to an independent income.

46. In the area of institutional development, for example, the first step of a gender analysis framework would comprise a diagnosis of the gender issue in the traditional rural production and distribution structure. A thorough evaluation of institutional structures could be made only after analysis of the current economic activities of the majority of the rural population by gender category, and the extent and quality of the involvement of rural women in the traditional production structure.

47. The effectiveness of institutions to promote rural development and improve the situation of women could then be analysed in the light of the importance of such institutions to the traditional production system. The substantive issues to consider would include identification of the type of formal/informal associations, their economic and social purpose, their membership by gender and constitution, the rules for access to membership and leadership positions and whether those rules are gender-biased, linkages with similar groups or associations and their financial condition.

48. Recently, international organizations and donor agencies concerned with rural development have been reassessing the utility of relying solely on women in development projects to bring about an improvement in the status of rural women. The basic long-term concern of programmes and projects in rural areas for women should be to promote activities that will not be made marginal by development. However, women in development projects often aim to increase the productivity of women's typical tasks, which may perpetuate the marginal productivity of women. 8/ It is therefore essential that rural development projects that aim to improve the situation of women first identify long-term development trends in rural areas.

49. Another problem associated with women in development projects arises from their sensitivity to women's normative roles. 8/ The example may be cited of a project in an African country where tribal rules prevent individual women from owning sheep. The solution was simply to organize women into groups so that the sheep became their collective property. 9/ Although on the surface the project appears to be successful, it should be borne in mind that such measures are merely temporary, and that those who implement projects, need to work hand-in-hand with policy makers to bring about changes in the socio-economic fabric that eventually would place women on an equal footing with men. That objective is not inconsistent with the role of women in transmitting local cultures.

50. Gender-sensitive mainstream projects are therefore a more effective way to reach large numbers of women and ensure them of significant benefits. Recent studies indicate that women-only projects, particularly in rural areas, tend to have a minimal effect, largely owing to their small budgets, low government priority and lack of appropriate technical skills by project management staff. 5/

51. The main advantage of gender analysis is that it allows in-depth analysis of the specific constraints facing both rural men and women, such as different levels of income, different propensities to save and invest, different consumption patterns, different levels of aversion to risk and different levels of access to productive resources. Those disparities are highly pronounced within the rural household and condition, to a great extent, the manner in which women and men respond to different opportunities offered by rural development programmes and projects. Understanding the factors responsible for the

inequitable distribution of benefits and the gender-differentiated contribution to productive activities is a basic prerequisite for the success of rural development strategies. Examples of gender analysis methods are incorporated in the analysis, in the following sections, of programmes and projects targeted at human resources development of rural women and access to resources.

C. Human resources development

52. Although in a number of countries programmes have been implemented that fostered the development of rural women's human capital, mainly through the provision of health and education services, the contribution of women's reproductive activities to the development process have largely been ignored. In many other countries, particularly in the developing regions, the issues of education and training and the health of the rural population had not received adequate attention.

53. International donor agencies, United Nations organizations and the specialized agencies have, since the mid-1980s, helped train women selected by local women's groups to be promoters in rural development and organize their own groups. In addition to the provision of training in literacy, nutrition and improving housing and environmental conditions, those projects assist the women in earning income and teach them how to gain access to funding and technical assistance at both the community and national levels. Special training programmes for government officials on integrating women into the process of rural development have also been implemented in the Latin America region. 10/

54. It has been observed that, in many countries, rural women who participate in income-generating projects express more interest in information on family planning and child nutrition than do non-participants. Women who have access to education tend to delay child-bearing and use family planning. For example, studies indicate that only a third of women who have less than five years of education use contraceptives but for those who stay in school for nine years the proportion rises to three quarters. 11/

55. In many regions of the world, there is still a tendency to send boys to school while girls are expected to stay at home to look after their younger siblings and help their mothers. The world's 40 poorest countries have made great advances in expanding primary education over the last 25 years; however, on the average, boys still outnumber girls by almost a quarter. 11/ The latest available data indicate that girls between the ages of 10 and 14 contribute 22 per cent of the family labour, while boys in the same age group contribute only 6 per cent. 9/

56. In order to change the situation, not only do the curricula of the overall education system need to be improved, but the vocational and other training programmes in rural development institutions also need to be reorganized. An increase in female enrolment must be accompanied by appropriate curricula, for both girls and boys, in terms of the skills taught and keeping in view future employment possibilities. Education programmes in rural areas should include courses on farming methods, resource management, health, nutrition, legal rights of rural women and courses on family planning for both women and men.

57. Furthermore, while designing human resources development policies targeted at rural women, the feedback relationship between women, health and sustainable development should be borne in mind. Women, particularly in rural areas, are the main providers of health care to their families. Although much progress has been made in the provision of primary health care for rural women in many countries, much still needs to be done. Studies indicate some evidence of gender discrimination in access to health care: in rural areas of many developing countries, boys are more likely to be brought in to clinics and hospitalized than girls, despite equal incidence of infection and availability of free clinical care. 12/

58. In some developing countries, health programmes that have been particularly successful in recent years included activities related to the development of human resources for health concerning women as both health beneficiaries and providers. Most of those programmes were implemented under the auspices of the ministry of health in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The aim of the programmes was to identify and enhance the potential of women's organizations in maternal and child health and family planning programmes. 7/

59. Gender discrimination, through unequal access of women and girls to health care and education and training opportunities, often leads to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The first consequence of this interaction between gender and poverty is the children's nutritional status. Malnutrition has particularly severe consequences in the first years of life, affecting mental development and morbidity and mortality. Child-bearing can often be fatal for rural women because of their limited access to nutrition and health care. In many developing countries, where maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world, women who have not been successful in producing healthy children, particularly healthy sons, are usually under pressure from their families to undergo a succession of closely spaced births, increasing their risk of premature death. That risk is compounded by the fact that, often, those women lack access to professional health care, and sometimes suffer from anaemia. 13/

D. The effects of demographic changes on rural women

60. Recent decades have seen a fall in the average mortality rate and a rise in average life expectancy in developing countries. An increasing trend of rural to urban migration has been observed at the same time, which is typically labour dominant and has produced an outflow of young, mostly male, workers to the urban centres. The main effect of the recent demographic changes has been an ageing of the rural population.

61. Elderly women, under this scenario, have been placed in a particularly disadvantaged situation. Studies indicate that the traditional role and status of elderly women in developing countries are likely to be strongly challenged by recent demographic developments. First, with declining mortality, widowhood occurs at an older age at which the potential for economic activity and a positive contribution to family welfare is reduced. Secondly, there is a high risk that the female elderly will continue to face a substantial decrease in the availability of family support as a result of marital instability, migration or population ageing. 14/

62. The demographic changes have resulted in a substantial decrease in economic support for the ageing rural population, which has affected elderly women more adversely than elderly men because of the general tendency of males to control income. Moreover the outflow of young wage-earners from rural areas has tended to contribute to both marital instability and a breakdown of the extended family as a care-taking device, which has had adverse effects particularly on the very old and the very young.

63. Elderly rural women not only provide care for children, thus enabling the young rural women to work outside the home, but also form the backbone of the food-farming population in many developing countries. In many countries of the world, elderly rural women also engage in marketing activities and handicrafts, producing objects for household use or for sale to supplement the household budget. The significant contribution of elderly women to their families and to the economy goes largely unrecognized, however.

64. The gravest disadvantage of the present generation of elderly women in most developing countries, particularly those living in rural areas, is their lack of formal education. This has important policy implications. Without education and training, women in general and rural women in particular are likely to be ignored by the mainstream of national development efforts and liable to receive less than their due for their contribution to the economy. It may be concluded that education is a crucial variable in development, not only in its own right but also because it is related to occupation, income, fertility and mortality behaviour as well as health status, health practices, political awareness and participation. Furthermore, it is essential for policy makers to recognize the vital contribution that all rural women, including the elderly, make to their families and communities through their reproductive activities.

65. Increasing the social and economic role of women, through investment in human resources from birth onwards, is therefore the best preventive response to possible social challenges arising from socio-demographic changes. The advancement of women is not limited to the elimination of discrimination, which often comes as a corrective measure, nor is it limited to prevention of discrimination. It has to go beyond such a narrow approach to become an upstream investment in human resources, adapted to each successive generation. Only then can the intergenerational transmission of poverty and the disadvantaged situation of rural women be slowed down and finally stopped. 15/

66. Education and training have strong linkages with accessibility and control of factors of production. Women living in rural areas who have obtained some measure of education and training tend to have a greater capacity than those without education or training to negotiate credit and access to land and other factors of production, and to manage their earnings from income-generating activities.

E. Access to and control of productive resources

67. Increasing women's awareness of their rights, particularly in the case of rural women, is one of the essential means identified for improving their situation. Although progress has been made in some countries in ensuring the gender neutrality of legislation, effective implementation and enforcement are

lacking. The raising of women's awareness and knowledge of their legal rights is the first step towards increasing their access to and control of productive resources and improving their opportunities for income-generating activities.

1. Increased awareness of women of their rights, including legal literacy

68. Learning about rights and the proper utilization of the legal system in order to achieve those rights has been termed "legal literacy". Consequently, programmes to develop legal literacy for women have been identified as a major means for achieving the goal of gender equality. 16/

69. In some countries the rights of women, particularly those living in rural areas, have been defined at the national level in ways not relevant to their social, economic and cultural experiences and the reality of their lives. Often, even in countries where women have rights and have access to their rights, many women cannot exercise their rights because of economic, cultural or political factors, educational limitations, social conditioning and the administration of justice.

70. A process of legal literacy informed by a gender perspective would significantly contribute to a betterment of the situation of women, particularly rural women, since they are the most disadvantaged as a group in terms of lack of opportunity. For legal literacy to achieve that objective it must be conceived in a dynamic political and economic framework. Specific recommendations to policy makers on how to improve legal literacy for rural women are outlined in section II above. The role of legal literacy is to help women, particularly in rural areas, to understand that their rights and the exercise of their rights are a resource for their personal and social development and empowerment. Improvement of the legal literacy of rural women acquires a critical importance when considered in the light of the sharp increase in their poverty and consequent worsening of their situation world wide.

2. Poverty and households headed by females

71. With the alarming increase in the number of rural women living in poverty, it has now become more urgent than ever to assure those women greater access to factors of production. The latest available data show that the numbers of rural women living in poverty in the developing countries have increased by almost 50 per cent over the past 20 years to 565 million: 374 million in Asia, 130 million in Africa, 43 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and 18 million in the Near East and north Africa. 11/

72. The strong interlinkage between gender and poverty is evidenced by the rising numbers of households headed by females, particularly in the rural sector. Female headship emerged as an early indicator of women's poverty because it was the only one that was visible in household-based approaches to poverty. A study estimated that in the developing world between 10 and 30-40 per cent of all households fell into this category. 17/

73. Households recorded as having a female head encompass disparate household economies and family structures. There is an important distinction between female-managed, where women manage household economies on behalf of an absent male head and female-maintained, where women are the main economic contributors. Studies on the subject have shown that households maintained primarily by women, particularly in the rural sector, are likely to be among the poorest in most societies. 17/

74. The magnitude of the problem derives partly from social and family instability, as a consequence of war, civil disturbance, over-rapid urbanization and male migration, and partly from the increasing difficulty of gaining access to factors of production. The rapid increase in poverty, particularly in the rural areas, is also affected by government cutbacks in health, education and social services that were part of the remedial measures of structural adjustment policies. For example, World Bank statistics show that 37 of the world's poorest countries cut their health budgets by half by the mid-1980s.

3. Women, environment and development

75. The crucial interrelationship between women, environment and development has been increasingly recognized in recent years. In most developing countries, particularly in Africa, food production is undertaken mainly by women, and therefore issues related to food security, land rights and environmentally sustainable land use practices are central to their lives.

76. Several United Nations bodies have been involved in programmes and project activities that include ecologically sound resource management objectives. For example, among the main activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to promote the involvement of women in environmental issues was the establishment of the Senior Women's Advisory Group and support, since 1988, of the Global General Assembly of Women and the Environment. 7/ At the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a report of the Secretary-General was presented on women and the environment, under the priority theme of development, 18/ and a draft resolution on women, environment and development was adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for action by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1993. 19/

77. Environmental deterioration has reached significant proportions over the past decade. The main causes are rapid population growth, increased pressure on land, deforestation, shifting cultivation and desertification. The depletion of forestry resources, in particular, has had a significant negative impact on women: first, apart from their value as a productive resource, trees protect the quality of soil and water. Most tropical farming systems are unsustainable without trees as part of the system; secondly, forests provide food, fodder and fibre - products which fall within women's responsibility; thirdly, small-scale enterprises dependent on forestry products are among the major employers of rural women, particularly the landless and resource poor.

78. A National Tropical Forestry Action Plan has been requested by several Governments, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP and the World Bank are jointly working on the global ecological implications of desertification and deforestation. Under the Plan of Action to

Combat Desertification, of 1977, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/172 of 19 December 1989, UNEP took a major role in providing assistance to countries in establishing their national plan of action for controlling the process of desertification. A number of United Nations organizations have actively pursued activities to combat deforestation and soil degradation, such as rotation of crops and tree-planting programmes, and to encourage better, sustainable use of forest products. It is essential to learn from rural women about conservation and management of the environment: according to several studies, women have greater knowledge than men of the qualities of forest species. 7/ Although they are the main collectors of fuelwood, women in developing countries often resist the cutting down of trees and cut down branches instead for as long as possible. According to the reports of specialized agencies concerned with rural development, women's groups in some countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, with appropriate training in forestry, tree planting and the management of plantations, have helped create new forest lands. 9/

4. Access to technology

79. New agricultural technologies should be accessible, preferably utilizing local material, and environmentally sound, and they should maximize efficiency without threatening women's and men's jobs in the rural sector. New agricultural technologies include new crop varieties and breeds of livestock, and improved tools, cultivation methods and/or mechanization practices. A number of United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and regional commissions have implemented projects that have strengthened women's capabilities in the use of new technologies through training and participation. 7/

80. A review of projects over the past decade reveals that technology, if not carefully evaluated before use, can, in some cases, have unforeseen negative effects on women. In many parts of the developing world, the mechanization of agriculture, for example the use of tractors, has resulted in the masculinization of modern agriculture and the feminization of labour in subsistence agriculture or on family farms. Another unforeseen negative impact on women results from certain types of irrigation technology: although irrigation technology can increase crop production and make water more readily available to households and livestock, in some cases it can affect women negatively by increasing the time needed to transplant crops, weed and harvest. New technologies can also be too expensive for resource-poor rural women to buy. One way to solve this problem is to learn from the traditional practices of rural women and minimize the use of expensive technology. For example, the main objective of many projects funded by United Nations organizations, particularly in Africa, was to upgrade traditional food processing without resorting to expensive technology.

5. Access to and control of land

81. Lack of access to land remains one of the main obstacles to the full participation of women in rural development. Inheritance practices, whereby land traditionally passes from father to son, reinforce male control of land. Although many developing countries have passed statutes legally affirming a

woman's fundamental right to own land, in practice female control of land is rare and exceptional. In many countries, land has traditionally been awarded to the male head of household, which has undermined married women's rights to a joint share.

82. In many regions, particularly in Africa, customary rules that are not necessarily enforced through a judicial system, but nevertheless have considerable authority, also tend to favour men over women in land rights. Moreover, in many countries, there is legislative provision for widowed, separated or divorced women. As noted above, promotion of legal literacy can help women obtain their fair land rights.

83. Women's access to land is also impeded by demographic and environmental factors. Recent studies on improving the productivity of women farmers in sub-Saharan Africa indicate that, over the past 30 years, efforts to improve women's rights to land have been neutralized by growing population pressure on increasingly depleted land and the fact that, as the quality of the land deteriorates, women are managing smaller plots. 20/

84. The difficulties experienced by rural women in securing access to land are even greater for women heads of households. Review of land reform programmes in various countries indicates that, regardless of whether the sex of the beneficiary is specified by law, women heads of households seldom have access to land even when their productive activities call for it. Without title to land, those women lack the collateral necessary to obtain credit and face difficulties in obtaining extension, since extension agents tend to be reluctant to work with small, isolated plots.

85. In spite of the negative prospects for rural women, some positive and innovative initiatives have been taken in this area that are worth discussing. There has been a major policy change on agrarian reform in recent years, whereby women have often been defined as the beneficiaries, and granted the right to own land either jointly or with men. Legal changes are allowing a small number of women in various developing countries to open bank accounts, take court action on their own or inherit their father's property. Women's national machineries have been particularly successful in this regard in some countries in the Indian subcontinent, Central and South America and west Africa. Moreover some organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP), have implemented projects in developing countries in which reclaimed land has been allocated to women, and have targeted projects to benefit marginal and landless women. 7/

86. The improvement of women's legal access to land is a basic prerequisite for the success of rural development policies. Activities that could be considered for the improvement of women's access to and control over land, particularly in developing regions, include legal literacy training for both women and men on women's rights, research on legislative reforms for rural areas, removing barriers to the effective implementation of existing laws, and focusing on ways to improve women's participation in self-help and cooperative groups.

6. Access to credit

87. Women's access to credit is often limited by their lack of collateral, such as land, and their lack of education. In the vast majority of cases, they must rely on their husbands and male relatives, or on money-lenders who tend to charge high interest rates. On the whole, banks have tended to underestimate the productivity of women farmers and their ability to repay loans. World wide, only 7 to 11 per cent of loans go to women, in spite of their excellent repayment record, which is usually higher than that of male farmers. The latest available data indicate that the average repayment rate of rural women in Africa, for example, was as high as 97 per cent. 21/

88. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh constitutes an example of how, with small loans (about US$ 30-240), resource-poor rural women can work towards the betterment of their lives. Since the loans are given to women with little or no collateral, repayment, which is almost 97 per cent, is a point of honour reinforced by peer pressure in the village group to which every borrower must belong.

89. Credit is essential for women to obtain vital agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, as well as to buy tools, procure animal draught power, hire extra labour, construct irrigation systems and take soil and water conservation measures. To be sure, credit alone is not sufficient to guarantee sustainable improvement in women's conditions. It must be accompanied by appropriate technological advice and training, and applied research, particularly in sectors that are of concern to women, including traditional food crops such as cassava, cowpeas, sorghum, millet, plantain and sweet potatoes, which provide up to two thirds of family nutrition, small livestock and poultry and home vegetable gardens.

90. In a few African and Asian countries, savings and credit schemes have recently been introduced by some of the specialized agencies concerned with rural development in collaboration with a financing institution, under which farmer groups, consisting of 80 per cent women, receive intensive training in crop selection, methods of planting and cultivation, fertilizer application and harvesting. Training is also provided in group interaction, participatory production planning, group record-keeping and evaluation of the previous season's production and activities. 9/ Loans for women's groups have the added advantage of reaching the poorest women, who taken individually would be ineligible. Indeed, the specialized agencies concerned with rural development have increasingly focused their efforts on devising ways of making credit available to women. For example, since 1984, 86 per cent of IFAD projects have included credit for women, compared to only 27 per cent for the period from 1978 to 1984. Local conditions are examined to determine the most effective mechanisms for reaching the poorest women. 21/

91. Some developing countries have reported enhancement of their policies to increase rural women's access to financial services and technical assistance through schemes such as promotion of financial institutions that design plans of action for increasing women's access to financial services; encouraging documentation and exchange of experiences among financial institutions on innovative credit schemes which provide easier access to rural women; development of options for financial services, technical assistance, training and resources with special attention to rural women's needs; establishment of

closer links with women bankers in those financial institutions that receive loans from international organizations, including organizations of the United Nations system.

92. The importance of ensuring access to credit, for both on-farm and off-farm activities, should not be underestimated. Analysis of projects of various United Nations organizations over the past decade has shown that the impact of credit availability can be dramatic, both on family well-being and on the community at large. Apart from the economic advantage of increased productivity and higher income, the increase in women's earning power has a tremendous effect on their self-confidence. Increased self-esteem has often led women to enrol in education programmes and to insist on having a greater role in community activities - initiatives that previously they would never have considered.

7. Access to extension

93. The latest available data indicate that although women represent up to 80 per cent of the food producers in some countries, they receive only 2 to 13 per cent of the extension services. On the whole, in the area of extension, the needs of women farmers have largely been overlooked: only 3 per cent of extension organizations' time and resources are allocated to women in Asia, and only 5 per cent in the whole world. 22/ Moreover, agricultural training tended in the past to focus on improving export crops, where male farmers predominate. Training with respect to livestock and subsistence crops, where women farmers predominate, has received much less attention.

94. In some regions, cultural constraints limit the recruitment of female extension agents and prevent male extension workers from interacting with women. World wide, the majority of extension workers tend to be male: for example, only 7 per cent of all agricultural extension staff in Africa are women, and for the entire world the figure is only 13 per cent. 22/

95. To redress this situation, extension systems should consider increasing gender awareness by addressing gender concerns in surveys and by training extension agents, both male and female, in gender issues and gender-disaggregated needs assessment; they should collect gender-disaggregated data on agricultural activities and constraints and use the data to design, implement and monitor extension activities. To bring extension to rural women, complete and correct information on women farmers in the region must first be obtained. One way of communicating extension advice to female producers would be through working groups of rural women, taking extension activities to women's sites if possible and adopting approaches to the fragmented pattern of women's time allocation.

96. Some countries in South-East Asia, southern and north Africa have successfully recruited and trained female extension workers as a means of reaching women farmers. In a few countries, moreover, male extension agents receive specific guidance on working with women farmers. Training programmes for women, however, tend to emphasize domestic rather than agricultural skills although both are relevant and need to be combined.

8. Access to income-generating activities: rural micro-businesses, marketing, livestock raising

97. Aside from the immense and unrecognized economic value of household activities, women are also responsible for a large portion of the mainstream economic activities of rural families. Indeed, the smaller the farm and poorer the family, the more significant are women's economic contributions. A recent survey of 114 developing countries indicates that, world wide, 67 per cent of rural women are engaged in agriculture and produce 55 per cent of the food of the developing world. 23/ In Africa, women produce an estimated 70 per cent of the continent's food; in Latin America, the small family farms, where women account for half the income, account for 41 per cent of the region's domestically consumed agricultural products and 32 per cent of its agricultural exports. 22/

98. Faced with their dual responsibilities in the areas of family formation and family livelihood, which involve earning a living and taking care of family members, women generally work longer hours than men. The official statistics on female participation in the labour force capture only some dimensions of women's work and not the full range of the tasks they perform. As shown in studies done for the International Labour Organisation, there has been a systematic tendency in population census figures to underestimate the levels of female participation in the labour force because much of the women's work in rural areas is counted as unpaid family labour, owing to its seasonal and intermittent nature. 17/

99. A large and growing number of rural women are pursuing off-farm employment. In most cases, the women have little or no access to land or live in ecologically fragile environments where farming or livestock raising is limited. Off-farm employment is therefore an attractive - sometimes the only - alternative. Although many of those women are employed as wage labourers on large farms or in the local factories, employment is often only temporary and wages low. Self-employment through small-scale enterprises run by women, either individually or in groups, presents a much better option in terms of providing a reliable source of income and economic self-reliance.

100. Studies indicate that the greater the amount of income under women's control, the greater the amount devoted to the children's health and nutrition. Moreover, income-generating activities tend to give women a higher status within the family. These two observations have led to a strong recommendation for increasing women's participation in income-generating activities. 24/

9. Small-scale rural enterprises, food processing and marketing

101. In many developing countries, a high percentage of rural micro-businesses that cater to local needs are controlled or owned by women. In Latin America, for example, women own between a third and half of all small rural enterprises. In that region, it is estimated that between 20 and 35 per cent of those rural households that live above the poverty line are able to do so largely because of those women's contributions to the family welfare. 21/ Those enterprises tend to be relatively small ventures, have informal structures, flexibility, low capital needs, modest educational requirements and high labour intensity. The overwhelming majority depend on local raw materials and cater to local markets.

102. The variety of enterprises that women have set up or improved with the help of United Nations organizations, the specialized agencies or international donor agencies is quite wide, ranging from various types of trading to crop processing, from handicrafts and other cottage industries to services. In some South-East Asian countries, for example, rural credit projects funded by various United Nations organizations (the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), FAO, IFAD, UNIFEM) have enabled women to engage in making textiles and rattan furniture, and in handloom weaving. The most successful projects have addressed the needs of rural women through a combination of income-generation, social development and training in loan management and marketing activities. 7/

103. Women in rural areas are active participants in retail trading and marketing, particularly where trade is traditional and not highly commercialized or industrialized. In much of Asia, women market foods such as vegetables; in west Africa, they distribute most major commodities, and in the Caribbean women account for nearly all local marketing. Moreover, through their marketing efforts, women provide valuable links between farms, consumer goods and buyers.

104. Assessment of rural development programmes and projects shows that, in some societies, the tendency of the male head of household to control all income might encourage women to hide their marketing activities, thus limiting their access to more lucrative markets. Particularly in societies where there is strict segregation of the sexes, women are often compelled to rely on their children for marketing, thus restricting their marketing activities to the local market and reducing the amount to be sold.

105. Application of gender analysis in the assessment of rural enterprises would contribute greatly to the promotion of productivity and lead to sustainable improvement in the situation of rural women. The first step would involve a ranking of prevailing types of enterprises that would then be used to determine which types are more popular among women by life cycle of woman, family status and whether she is the head of household. Once these data are compared with those for men, types of enterprises could be identified that are to be targeted for reaching resource-poor women at different stages of their life cycle. Studies made of the marketing circuits of different products and services should be used to identify the points where it would be strategically possible to minimize intermediary transaction costs for gender-specific managed enterprises.

106. The next step would include assessment of the enterprises' financial viability. Studies of different types of micro enterprises (those managed by women and men singly, mixed group enterprises and family enterprises) that measure returns to labour and other investments should be analysed to determine how income varies per labour input and where the labour constraints are on enterprise expansion and/or profit growth by gender of labourer. Moreover, credit options should be evaluated to assess the extent of demand determined by the gender of the borrower. Hidden costs to enterprises arising from government price regulations, taxes, registration permits and procedures must also be calculated in order to evaluate how those costs could be minimized by means of alternative policies for informal sector enterprise operations, particularly so that the development of women's enterprises could be encouraged.

10. Livestock and poultry farming and fisheries

107. The extent of women's ownership and control of livestock varies from region to region and country to country. In the Indian subcontinent, for example, women are responsible for 60 to 80 per cent of the feeding and milking of large animals such as cattle. When large animals are penned and fed, caring for them tends to fall within the domestic responsibilities of women. In general, poultry and animals such as sheep and goats are an important economic resource for women because they are often the only source of income fully under their control. Moreover, poultry and small animals tend to contribute to a greater extent to the diet of low-income groups than do larger animals such as cattle.

108. Dairy development training programmes set up by one specialized agency, which enabled women to participate in dairy cooperatives, have enjoyed a marked degree of success in the area of small-scale animal production. In one country in Africa, for example, the dairy cooperatives have not only doubled the production of milk, but also marketed their own cheese to hotels and local restaurants. Training in cheese-making enabled the women to preserve milk that otherwise would have spoiled. 9/

109. Although some United Nations organizations have implemented projects in many developing regions on livestock production, few livestock extension programmes include women. Another problem is the scarcity of livestock production centres. One mountainous Asian country reported that it had only one centre to serve an entire district, which, given the vast and difficult distances, made it impossible to give courses in livestock care to women's groups in villages around the periphery. To alleviate this problem, more locally based development offices need to be established. Yet another problem that needs to be given priority is the deteriorating ecology in many developing countries. Although in a few countries trees have been planted and eroded land reclaimed, most countries are faced with an overall critical shortage of firewood and fodder.

110. In many developing countries, fishing is a major economic activity. While men usually fish, women process and market the catch. Several United Nations bodies (IFAD, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the World Bank) have conducted studies, held seminars and implemented projects on fisheries and coastal development. For example, the World Bank had included, in its fisheries projects, special measures on improving the status of women and involving them in the project's activities. 7/

111. Application of gender analysis in livestock raising would enable policy makers to identify more clearly the gender dimensions in the production process, feeding systems, market outlets, movements in prices, demand and supply, net income per labour input and the ecosystem. Information concerning the livestock activities carried out by the household, including the sex and family status of the manager, and those responsible for fodder, feeding and reproduction activities, must be the starting-point. The next step would include evaluation of the present ecological system, for current livestock numbers and production systems that are managed singly by women or men or jointly managed. The physical analysis should then be compared with a social analysis - the types of information needed by women and men better to understand

and identify their physical resources and develop their feeding source potentials, within the livestock production households.

112. Analysis of the ecological system is of particular importance since land use and the feeding system determine the amount of livestock production that can be sustained without adverse effects on the environment and, thus, the financial viability of livestock production. Analysis of the feeding system should also include an evaluation of the rights of males and females to fodder trees and tree tenure.

113. In the light of the above analysis, and taking into account seasonal patterns of livestock production and crop production, appropriate timetables should be devised for setting up training programmes for women and men, to address specific types of problems faced by each.

Notes

1/ As at 1 June 1993, reports had been received from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America and Venezuela. A report from Australia was expected.

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5/ 1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.89.IV.2).

6/ The World's Women: Trends and Statistics 1970-1990 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XVII.3).

7/ Research paper on the activities of the United Nations system on women in environment and development, prepared by the United Nations Secretariat for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (Research Paper No. 41).

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12/ L. C. Chen and S. D'Souza, "Sex bias in the family allocation of food and health care", Population and Development Review, vol. 7, No. 3 (1981).

13/ Naila Kabeer, "Gender dimensions of rural poverty", The Journal of Peasant Studies, vol. 18, No. 2 (January 1991).

14/ "Integration of Ageing Women in Development: choice or necessity?": background paper prepared by the United Nations Secretariat for the Expert Group Meeting on the Integration of Elderly Women into Development, Vienna, 7-11 October 1991 (EGM/AEWD/1991/WP.1); "Help for self-help: elderly African women ahead of development": paper prepared for the Fifteenth International Congress of Gerontology, Budapest, 4-9 July 1993.

15/ "Integration of ageing women in development ...".

16/ Report of Expert Group Meeting on Increased Awareness by Women of Their Legal Rights, including Legal Literacy, Bratislava, 18-22 May 1992 (EGM/IAWR/1992/1).

17/ Report of the Secretary-General on women in extreme poverty: integration of women's concerns in national development planning (E/CN.6/1993/3).

18/ E/CN.6/1992/9.

19/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 7 (E/1993/27).

20/ Contribution of FAO to the preliminary version of the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development.

21/ "Credit for rural women: the catalyst for development": paper prepared for the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, Geneva, 25 and 26 February 1992 (IFAD, 1992).

22/ "The situation of the world's rural women: banking on women - facts and figures": paper prepared for the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, Geneva, 25 and 26 February 1992 (IFAD, 1992).

23/ "Poverty traps: 550 million rural women": paper prepared for the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, Geneva, 25 and 26 February 1992 (IFAD, 1992).

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WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Secretary-General

BACKGROUND

By its resolution 47/92, the General Assembly decided to convene a World Summit for Social Development at the level of heads of State or Government to be held early in 1995. In paragraph 5 (a) to (k) of that resolution, the Assembly set out the objectives of the Summit, and in paragraph 6 decided, taking into account those objectives, that the core issues affecting all societies to be addressed by the Summit were:

(a) The enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups;

(b) Alleviation and reduction of poverty;

(c) Expansion of productive employment.

The General Assembly also recommended that the Economic and Social Council, at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1993, consider the theme "World Summit for Social Development".

By its decision 1993/204, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session for 1993, the Council decided that its high-level segment of 1993 should be devoted to the consideration of the major theme: "World Summit for Social Development, including the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development".

In that decision, the Economic and Social Council invited the Secretary-General, in preparing the report for the high-level segment, to pay attention

to ways of attaining the objectives of the Summit and to examine the core issues as set out in General Assembly resolution 47/92, and the role of the United Nations system in those matters, and also invited the appropriate organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies, to contribute to the preparation of the report within their areas of competence.

The present report has been prepared in response to the Economic and Social Council's request, on the basis of consultations with and contributions from the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The main thrust of the report is to address the above-mentioned core issues and explore possible approaches and policies, at the national and international levels, required for the attainment of the social objectives identified in General Assembly resolution 47/92. The analysis is anchored in the present global context and the perspective of the 1990s. The report attempts to encompass in a balanced manner the principal elements of the Assembly resolution and to bring out the interlinkages between peace and stability, economic development and social progress in the new international context.

The purpose of this report is to assist the Economic and Social Council in exploring the key social issues and objectives for the 1990s rather than in reaching agreements or decisions. The report should thus be seen as being exploratory in nature, as raising questions and indicating areas that would benefit from further international debate and professional inquiry.

Additional information to be made available to the Council provides an overview of the wide array of activities that the organizations of the system are undertaking in the social development field. It also highlights a selected number of major social goals and targets adopted by the United Nations system as well as recent and planned meetings and publications in the social area. This information is intended to give an idea of the considerable work already under way in the system that would need to be taken into account in the preparations for the Summit.

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I. GLOBAL SETTING

1. In these, the closing years of the twentieth century, the world has entered a time of historic transition. With the end of the cold war and the spread of democracy, there is a sense of great opportunity and hope that a new world can be built - a world of peace and stability, where the goal of social progress and better standards of living in larger freedom can be realized through genuine international cooperation.

2. The surge of democracy throughout the world has created a new feeling of freedom, but it also requires that the aspirations of people everywhere for a better life be met sooner rather than later. At the same time, the assertion of ethnic, religious and cultural identities, often through violent means, has unleashed new threats to the stability and cohesion of societies. The world is witnessing a tragic phenomenon: the virtual collapse of state structures and institutions of civil society in a number of countries, which is bringing in its train bloodshed, hunger and famine.

3. Parallel to these political developments, major changes are taking place in the methods of economic management. Despite significant variations in national policies and institutions rooted in culture and history, in general the spread of open, market-based development strategies in all regions has helped create new possibilities for dynamism in the global economy. Yet the market is not alone sufficient. There is also increasing recognition of the need to address, in creative ways, the interaction among the social functions of the State, market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development. Policy makers and practitioners are actively seeking to devise a new development style that puts people at the centre, is responsive to social needs, seeks the alleviation and eradication of poverty and hunger, is predicated on and promotes the development of human resources, and is environmentally sound and sustainable.

4. However, this search is being stymied by a world economy that seems to have been slowing down markedly, owing mainly to a decline in that of Eastern Europe and of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. For three consecutive years, the expansion in world output has failed to match the increase in world population. Global output per head has thus been declining in the first three years of this decade. Quite apart from normal cyclical factors, there is a risk that the world economy might settle into a slow-growth pattern well below its optimum growth path. Economic uncertainty and lowered expectations can feed upon each other to slow down growth. Not only would such a course entail massive loss in output, employment and human welfare, but it also could make sustainable and socially equitable development vastly more difficult to realize. Reviving economic growth is thus a global challenge that must be faced globally.

5. The world remains deeply divided between the rich and the poor, both within and among countries. Of a total world income of some $20 trillion, almost three quarters accrues to only 16 per cent of the population living mostly in developed countries, while three quarters of the world's population, mostly in developing countries, shares only 15 per cent of that income. 1/ One fifth of the world's population (or over 1 billion people, who receive the lowest income) earns a little over 2 per cent of total world income. Of these, 180 million

live in Africa, 420 million in India, 210 million in China, 75 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the rest mostly in other developing countries.

6. These people constitute the world's poor, some of whom live in relative poverty in developed countries and in countries with transition economies. Some 500 million of these poor, or 10 per cent of the world's population, live in extreme poverty. While the numbers are staggering, even more worrisome is the following trend: except in Asia, the number of poor, in both absolute and relative terms, is growing in the developing world. The phenomenon of poverty is manifesting itself in many forms even in the industrialized world, particularly in countries with transition economies. Poverty thus remains the principal challenge of our day.

7. The high incidence of poverty and the unequal distribution of income are a direct result of the equally uneven distribution of capital and technology, comprising financial resources, physical assets and knowledge and skills. Illiteracy remains high in most developing countries. Public expenditures on education, health and sanitation are proportionately lower in developing countries in general than in developed countries. Investments in physical infrastructures and technology lag as Governments grapple with large fiscal and external deficits.

8. These manifestations of underdevelopment have been aggravated in a majority of developing countries in recent years by both international and domestic factors. Internationally, the most severe consequences followed from accumulated debt burdens and from persistently low relative prices and slack demand for commodities that many developing countries export for their development. Domestically, policies of stabilization and structural adjustment or major economic reforms have in the short term reduced growth in countries' employment and output levels. Previously existing social safety nets have been disrupted, aggravating the situation of vulnerable groups including women and children.

9. Social disruption and marginalization have also been brought about by social and political conflicts. The world refugee population doubled in a little over a decade to 20 million in 1992. 2/ Even larger numbers have been displaced from their homes and habitats within their own countries. The number of disabled persons has increased severalfold during the last decade as a result of wars and civil strife in some developing countries. Young children orphaned by the death of parents who fell victim to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) constitute a new group whose absorption into the mainstream of economic and social life will require enormous effort. In developed countries, the breakdown of nuclear family institutions and the emergence of young mothers as sole supporters of families have created new patterns of poverty.

10. The past decade has seen a major surge in the movement of peoples across frontiers both among developing countries and between developing and developed ones as well as between Eastern European and Western European countries. While some of these immigrants leave their countries owing to fear of persecution, a majority depart for economic reasons. Immigrants who have yet to integrate themselves into the local culture are often marginalized in host societies.

11. Not only are the demographic pressures generated by high rates of population growth felt by Governments hard-pressed to expand educational, health

and other essential services, but they also manifest themselves in rural-urban immigration, high rates of urban unemployment and rural underemployment, growth of urban slums, expansion of the informal sector with unregulated and therefore inhuman labour conditions including child labour, breakdown of family structures, and a growing number of inactive young who have little hope of integration into the mainstream of society. The resulting environment of alienation and exclusion provides a fertile ground for the spread and growth of such social evils as drug abuse, crime and violence.

12. Technological change is transforming the way economic and social goods are produced and distributed, and crossing frontiers in a trend towards globalization that carries the promise of a truly integrated global economy. As the agents for global investment, transnational corporations are increasingly becoming the most important driving force for world trade, technological dissemination and economic growth. While global integration should enhance growth through a more efficient allocation of resources and by a tapping into new reserves of economic dynamism, it in fact also erodes the ability of Governments to effectively manage the pace and direction of economic and social change within their own borders. Moreover, economic and financial criteria tend to overshadow the design of social policies.

13. The revolution in communications is causing a new awakening of millions of people everywhere to their potential and possibilities, and thereby altering the nature of expectations; but for the vast majority among them, the avenues of fulfilment remain either closed or uncertain. The rapid spread of feelings of alienation, and of drug abuse, crime and terrorism, in so many parts of the world in recent years can be attributed at least in part to the despair, particularly among the young, born of lack of opportunity.

14. In a long-term perspective, the problem of social development has to be seen within the context of the economic, demographic and technological changes of the past several decades. Population growth and population movements, changes in economic and occupational structures, technological changes that are shifting the balance of advantage between groups and regions, and the information revolution that is affecting all aspects of life are but some of the longer-term fallouts that are having a profound impact on our value systems and social relations.

15. There is a generalized malaise within the social welfare system of the industrialized world. With persistently high rates of unemployment, large numbers of young people in Western countries and even larger numbers in the East see little prospect of productive employment. Poverty among children, women, the elderly and other vulnerable groups is not uncommon, and in many cases it has increased. The social safety nets are being stretched to the limit, and confronted with large fiscal deficits, Governments are finding it difficult to increase expenditures on social services.

16. The contradictions and dangers inherent in the rapidity and the global spread of the economic, political and social changes that are under way accentuate the necessity of strengthening international cooperation towards the interrelated objectives of securing peace, economic development and social progress. To secure enduring peace, we must eliminate want and poverty and ensure a better life for all in larger freedom.

17. The world community's consciousness of this need has been manifested through a number of meetings at the highest political level held on these great issues of our day. The first Summit Meeting of the Security Council ever held, which took place in January 1992, marked a historic step in reviving the role of the Council in the preservation of international peace and security. The World Summit for Children, held in September 1990, put the problems of children and the family firmly in place in the international agenda. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992), which was the largest gathering of heads of State and Government in history, helped make sustainable development a global imperative. The forthcoming conferences on human rights, on population and development and on women will address important aspects of social development. The convening of the World Summit for Social Development can be viewed as another historic landmark in the effort to develop an integrated global response to the universal human aspirations for peace, progress and justice.

II. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

18. Social development should be understood in a broad sense implying progress towards higher living standards, greater equality of opportunity and securing of certain basic human rights. It can also be viewed in terms of enhancing the abilities of individuals to control their own lives through economic, social and political actions. Social development is not welfare, nor is it divorced from all other kinds of development. On the contrary, it is crucial not only for improving the human condition but also for enhancing economic efficiency and securing conditions for political democracy. The task before Governments and the international community is therefore to devise integrated development strategies that would respond to a whole spectrum of human needs.

19. The three core issues - social integration, alleviation and reduction of poverty, and productive employment - are closely interrelated. The expansion of productive and remunerative employment is clearly a key requirement for the alleviation and reduction of poverty; it is also an important condition for enhancing social integration, since it provides individuals with a recognized role to play in society. However, growth of employment as such is not necessarily synonymous with a reduction of poverty or greater social integration. On the contrary, many millions of people throughout the world live in poverty and on the fringes of organized society - particularly in rural areas and in the urban informal sector of developing countries - although they have some form of employment. Many of those people work very hard indeed, but at very low levels of productivity, and consequently of income. They live and work in conditions of abject poverty, without any form of legal or social protection. Even in the industrialized countries, many people are employed under precarious conditions, and social groups such as migrant workers and racial minorities are frequently engaged in poorly remunerated, and unprotected, marginal activities.

20. The common themes underlying the three core issues of the Summit would seem, therefore, to be those of deprivation and exclusion. Deprivation should be understood to refer not only to material poverty, but also to cultural and social deprivation, resulting from a breakdown of family and community structures that provide individuals with a sense of security, belonging and participation. Exclusion is understood to refer to individuals and social

groups that are excluded from opportunities for education and social advancement, from any form of social protection or welfare, from the organized labour market, and from productive and gainful employment. It involves marginalization and alienation of individuals and groups and sometimes large masses of people. If these phenomena spread and are allowed to persist, they lead to breakdown of civic institutions.

21. Deprivation and exclusion are present in all countries, at all levels of development, even though the nature, extent and gravity of the problems vary greatly from country to country. Clearly, there is a need to promote a world-wide recognition of the global nature of these problems - global in the sense not only that they are commonly shared, but also that they require an intensified effort of global solidarity, from which all should ultimately benefit.

22. Any approach to addressing the problems of poverty, employment and social integration cannot be divorced from the global economic context or national economic policies. Jobs cannot be created, poverty cannot be overcome, greater social integration cannot be achieved, in conditions of economic stagnation or recession. An economic environment needs to be created that is favourable to the attainment of social objectives; but greater economic efficiency, important though it is, will not by itself suffice to ensure social progress: the quality of growth and the type of investments undertaken are as important as rates of aggregate growth and the magnitude of investment. Investments in human resources through improved education, health and training yield high rates of returns besides leading to greater equality and social progress.

23. The Summit will need to take into account the importance of bringing about greater harmony and integration between economic and social policy-making - at the international as well as at the national level. It will also need to examine these issues in the context of a growing globalization of the world economy that is leading to a changing international division of labour from which all countries should benefit, provided all are able to compete on an equitable basis.

24. However, a clear distinction needs to be made between the countries that are in a position to benefit from the above-mentioned changes, and those countries, particularly in Africa and the least-developed ones, that are being increasingly marginalized by such changes, with negative effects on employment, poverty alleviation and social cohesion. A major effort of international solidarity will be needed to assist those countries in building up their productive structures and human resources if they are to tackle effectively the immense social problems with which they are confronted. The Summit should be an occasion to promote such international solidarity.

25. A closely related question that will need to be addressed concerns the volume and the allocation of resources for the attainment of social goals. In order for most developing countries to successfully pursue viable human development strategies that lead to the realization of their national social objectives, they will need to mobilize greatly increased financial and material resources and reallocate them more efficiently to the social sector in accordance with their national priorities. The international community, including multilateral financial institutions and the United Nations system, would need to support these national efforts by a concomitant increase in and

reallocation of their financial and technical assistance for social development goals. The Summit should provide an opportunity for commitments, at the highest political level, to mobilize and reallocate resources for social development in all countries.

26. Social progress cannot be achieved by State action alone, or by complete reliance on market forces. Each country needs to find the right balance between State intervention including local government and private, community or non-governmental initiatives, in the light of its economic and social conditions and cultural traditions. Innovative and creative combinations of these elements will need to be developed to achieve synergy between efficiency and equity. Certain basic principles, however, should provide a common basis for action by all countries: The State has to guarantee full respect for human rights and freedoms, including particularly the right of all citizens to associate freely in organizations of their own choosing, and to participate in decisions that affect them directly. State action is also clearly necessary to provide a legal framework governing social relations and social protection, and to maintain a balance among different interest groups in accordance with the public interest; the State also has a responsibility to provide efficient social services to protect the most vulnerable groups of society, and to provide them with opportunities to be productive citizens and to reduce their vulnerability.

27. The State can only effectively discharge these responsibilities, however, if its actions are transparent, if it is accountable to democratically elected institutions, and if it not only tolerates but also promotes public debate and popular participation in decision-making at all levels. Cooperation and consultation between public authorities, private business, trade unions, rural communities and non-governmental organizations are vital to the success of economic and social policies, and the Summit should provide a forum not only for reaffirming these fundamental principles but also for devising creative ways of giving practical shape to them in the new international context.

28. A crucial consideration that has to be kept in view is the following: the poor, far from being welfare recipients exclusively must be seen as productive agents of society, who are able to - and actually do - contribute to growth and development. A key question for the Summit will therefore be how to make "banking on the poor" a unifying feature of development strategies.

29. A final consideration is that the key concerns of the Summit will need to be viewed in the light of Agenda 21, 3/ adopted by the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development, in which combating poverty, taking into account demographic dynamics and changing consumption patterns are presented as being among the principal elements of sustainable development. A critical factor tying together these three concerns of the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development and providing a link to the Summit is productivity. It is in the growth of productivity of the poor and of their access to resources that the substantive answer to the problems of poverty and social integration can be found. Increased productivity of the poor is also the surest path to sustainable development in developing countries where poverty is one of the principal causes of environmental degradation.

III. CORE ISSUES

30. The problems of lack of social integration, poverty and unemployment are encountered in varying degrees in all countries and regions of the world. Among developing countries, these problems persist as a result of a whole array of historical, political, economic and social factors that have defined their national experience since the achievement of independence. A large number of countries emerged from the colonial period with multi-ethnic societies characterized by great religious, linguistic and cultural diversity. Within the context of those countries having had little experience to draw on and of their having been confronted with the challenge of meeting popular expectations aroused by independence, the tasks of nation-building - including creating stable and legitimate political systems, putting into place social and economic infrastructures and spurring development, in an international environment that was not entirely favourable - turned out to be far more difficult than anyone could have anticipated at the outset. This is not to say, however, that there have been no accomplishments. Living conditions have improved significantly in a large number of developing countries as indicated by increasing life expectancy, better nutrition, rising literacy and falling infant mortality rates. Some among them have been able to reduce poverty, and create adequate employment opportunities, and have generally succeeded in achieving greater social cohesion and stability.

31. In industrialized societies, rapid economic expansion and the construction of elaborate systems of welfare in the first two decades after the Second World War led to the expectation that unemployment and poverty would be slowly but inexorably banished. In the past two decades, however, as economic growth slowed down and the whole panoply of policies constituting the welfare state came under increasing scrutiny, high rates of unemployment and persistent pockets of poverty have blemished the socio-economic landscape of even the most affluent societies.

32. In the countries with economies in transition, where in the past poverty and unemployment did not occur (at least in a formal sense), not only have these problems surfaced on a large scale but they are likely to remain major sources of social tension for the foreseeable future.

33. The preparatory process for the Summit and the Summit itself should provide a valuable opportunity not only to promote a better understanding of these interrelated phenomena and their underlying causes, but also to identify the most appropriate policy responses, at the national and international levels, for the purpose of addressing them. A closer scrutiny of successes and set-backs should suggest what works and what does not. This would involve filling in information gaps which remain large in the case of the poor, the disadvantaged and the rural and informal sectors in many countries. It would also require new and innovative approaches to concerting actions by Governments, communities, non-governmental organizations and other actors in the field in order to develop a total societal response based on the concept of a social compact or partnership for development.

A. The enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups

34. Social integration is a complex and elusive phenomenon that is not amenable to simple definition or measurement, but if it is to be addressed comprehensively and over the long term it needs to be demarcated broadly to encompass the socio-economic, cultural and even political dimensions including institutional and policy frameworks.

35. Apart from the consideration of commonly shared factors affecting social integration, questions relating to specific country situations will need to be addressed. What sorts of strategies, policies and institutional innovations have been tried, and with what results, in different cultural and political settings? What are the linkages between patterns of governance and equality of opportunity in a given society? What are the levels and patterns of resource allocations? To what extent are the disadvantaged and marginal groups targeted by specific policies and institutions? How much access do they have to services, resources and institutions of redress? What channels are available for the articulation of public needs and aspirations? Answers to these and similar questions would largely determine the extent of the stability and integration of a given society over the long term.

36. Social integration is often equated with stability, but apparent stability may conceal undercurrents reflecting deep social cleavages and tensions. As recent experience has so amply shown, societies considered well integrated at a certain time can be subject to profound convulsions soon after. Differences with respect to interests and views on political, economic and social policies are inherent in all societies and indeed constitute the essence of democratic politics. However, a broad consensus on societal goals and values and an institutional framework for resolving political, economic and social differences are a first prerequisite of lasting social integration.

37. Sharp differences in distribution of wealth and in living standards, and in access to resources such as land and capital and public services such as education and health can generate severe strains even in homogeneous societies. Most countries, however, are populated by multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. In such societies, discrimination, whether perceived or real, with respect to access to resources, institutions and services can lead to serious tensions and even civil conflict among religious, linguistic or ethnic groups. Thus equality of access and of opportunity is a central pillar of social integration.

38. Material prosperity widely shared can help resolve tensions and foster social cohesion. Rising living standards and increasing employment opportunities have contributed to ethnic harmony in several culturally diverse countries, but material well-being may not always be able to contain tensions if social and political policies reinforce ethnic divisions. Thus respect for human rights, tolerance of cultural diversity, rule of law, independence of the judiciary and promotion of institutions of civil society are all likely to favour social integration. The absence or erosion of these elements has often given rise to civil wars and ethnic conflicts.

39. All societies are characterized, though in varying degrees, by the existence of disadvantaged groups that feel excluded from full participation in

national life. These include the impoverished and the weak, and minority groups defined by religion, race, caste, colour or language. Small farmers and the landless, constituting more than half of the rural population of developing countries, are the largest groups among the disadvantaged in those countries. Other disadvantaged groups include pastoralists, nomadic and indigenous tribes, and ethnic minorities. Often, women, children and youth are disadvantaged and vulnerable. These groups have little access to economic and social services and few assets. Living precariously on the margin, survival is their principal preoccupation. Having large families constitute a part of their survival strategies. Their material poverty is often aggravated by social isolation, alienation, dependence, and lack of participation in decisions affecting their lives, and characterized by severely restricted choices.

40. Functional illiteracy and lack of training are a major cause of the marginalization of disadvantaged groups. Lack of power and access to resources and assets is both a cause and consequence of disadvantage and vulnerability. In general, tenants, sharecroppers and landless agricultural workers are dominated by and dependent upon a rural elite. Rapid population growth and poverty lead them to their overexploitation of the slender resource base available to them, which causes environmental damage to the forest cover and the soil.

41. This marginality trap is often reinforced by cultural, religious and political factors that result in discrimination against disadvantaged groups and minorities. An important task in achieving better social integration is therefore to address the problems of discrimination and social isolation without causing social conflict between the marginalized and the dominant. This implies attitudinal and institutional transformations to make societies more tolerant and just.

42. The unequal status of women remains a major social concern in practically all societies. In many countries, this is fortified through culturally and religiously justified relations. An improvement in the status of women, who constitute over one half of the population, and their integration into the mainstream of the socio-economic and political life of society are an essential prerequisite for the success of any social integration effort.

43. A very large proportion of youth in developing countries and a considerable number in developed ones are functionally illiterate and have trouble entering in the labour market. As a result, many of the young become "inactive". In recent years, the proportion of inactive youth has increased dramatically in all groups of countries, and this has resulted in alienation and other social ills. The phenomenon needs to be addressed by comprehensive functional training and employment-generation strategies.

44. The disabled and the elderly often suffer from marginalization owing to their vulnerability. In recent years, the number of disabled in the developing world has increased owing to civil strife and a higher frequency of natural disasters. Under conditions of poverty and owing to the weakening of extended family and communal ties, these people end up at the bottom of society. Formal arrangements for their security, protection and social integration are practically non-existent in most developing countries. An important task is therefore to build strong safety nets for these groups.

45. It is evident from the above discussion that enhancing social integration and bringing the vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of society into the mainstream remain a complex and difficult undertaking. Governments must serve as the cutting edge in ensuring full and democratic participation of the people in governance, setting the right policies, strengthening laws and institutions of justice and redress, ensuring a favourable environment for rapid economic growth and equality of opportunity, targeting disadvantaged groups so as to integrate them into the mainstream, and creating social safety nets for the vulnerable and the weak; but individuals, groups and communities have an equal responsibility to organize and to generate popular and democratic pressure against discrimination, deprivation and exclusion. Peaceful dialogue and communication are the keys to social integration. The international community has an equal responsibility to support these national efforts by creation of a favourable international environment and by adequate and stable development assistance flows for the attainment of the above-mentioned social objectives.

B. Alleviation and reduction of poverty

46. Over one billion people, or one fifth of humanity, subsist on an annual per capita income of less than US$ 370, or less than one dollar per day in 1985 prices. As shown in the table, the numbers of these poor have been rising at a rate nearly equal to that of population growth. Thus there were some 88 million more poor people in the world in 1990 than in 1985. Only in East Asia was there a decline in the number of the poor. In South Asia, their proportion with respect to the total population fell steadily in the 1980s but the total number of poor rose during the second half of the decade. In Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, the number of poor people increased both in relative and absolute terms. In general, even under fairly optimistic assumptions about global economic recovery during the rest of the present decade, it is quite possible that the total number of poor in the world at the turn of the century will be higher than the current number. 4/ Poverty thus remains the major concern and challenge that development strategies must tackle in the years to come.

47. As noted above, pockets of poverty also persist in the industrialized countries; but for the most part their economic conditions, welfare systems and low population growth rates suggest that the problem can be addressed with appropriate adjustments in policies. Conjunctural poverty, however, has grown dramatically in recent years in Eastern Europe and the newly independent successor States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as a result of rising unemployment, old-age pension provisions that have fallen behind inflation, reduced social expenditures, and other social costs associated with economic transformation.

48. Vigorous and sustained economic growth is clearly an essential condition for poverty reduction. Its importance for reducing poverty is illustrated by the experience of countries in East and South-East Asia, which have achieved sustained growth and also experienced large declines in poverty. The converse is also true: falls in per capita income in the 1980s in Latin America and Africa, for example, brought substantial increases in poverty. The pattern of growth is also an important factor in determining the extent of growth of the incomes of the poor. For example, equitable participation in rural-based growth

Poverty in the developing world, 1985-2000

Region	Percentage of population below poverty line a/			Number of poor (millions)		
	1985	1990	2000	1985	1990	2000
South Asia	51.8	49.0	36.9	532	562	511
East Asia	13.2	11.3	4.2	182	169	73
Middle East and north Africa	30.6	33.1	30.6	60	73	89
Sub-Saharan Africa	47.6	47.8	49.7	184	216	304
Latin America and the Caribbean	22.4	22.5	24.9	87	108	126
Eastern Europe b/	7.1	7.1	5.8	5	5	4
All low-income and middle-income countries c/	30.5	29.7	24.1	1 051	1 133	1 107

Source: World Bank, World Development Report, 1992: Development and the Environment (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), table 1.1.

a/ Poverty line used here based on an annual income per capita of $370 in 1985 purchasing power parity dollars.

b/ Not including the former USSR.

c/ Not including the former USSR and European Community middle-income countries Greece and Portugal.

in some large countries in Asia throughout the 1980s brought about an impressive reduction in poverty. Policies that helped open economic spaces for individual initiatives at the local level greatly facilitated this process.

49. Equal importance to policies promoting broad-based growth are increasing the availability of basic social services and improving their quality. Providing basic social services to all is an effective approach for reaching the poor, because the poor tend to benefit disproportionately from investments in basic services. Not only can they reap direct income gains from being better educated and in better health, but better health and education also increase their range of choices. The real opportunity that now exists to ensure access for everyone to basic education, primary health care including family planning, clean water and sanitation, and nutrition is an issue around which global agreement and a common purpose can be forged at the Summit.

50. A sound and growth-oriented macroeconomic framework will need to be complemented by targeted policies and strategies for the reduction and alleviation of poverty. Experience has shown that a greater impact can be

achieved if these are designed and implemented with the grass-roots participation of the poor, and build on their capacities and skills. Rural poverty can be reduced by access to small-scale rural credit, and extension services, by the building of small-scale irrigation works and feeder roads, and the provision of primary health care and education and potable water to improve the quality of life and capital of the poor. In many countries, land reform and improvements in tenancy, laws and practices may be necessary to improve asset ownership by the poor and to achieve a more efficient use of land resources. Agenda 21 has focused attention on the need to integrate resource management programmes and anti-poverty programmes, particularly in ecologically fragile areas like deserts, mountains, forests, coastal zones and small islands.

51. A reduction in urban poverty implies much greater attention to the informal sector, creation of favourable conditions for small-scale enterprises and micro-enterprises and enhanced access of the poor to essential services such as clean water and electricity, primary education and health care, transportation and improved housing conditions through the use of appropriate technologies.

52. Population growth and poverty are linked. Poverty, landlessness, and lack of access to education and health services lead to high fertility rates. A large family-size in its turn reinforces deprivation in poor households, and rapid population growth reduces the ability of poor countries to find the resources required for employment generation and social infrastructure. Reduced fertility rates will help poor households, particularly the women and children in such households, to aim at higher standard of consumption, and reduced population growth rates will help poor countries reduce the incidence of poverty and unemployment. Effective national population policies and programmes designed to encompass the poorer segments of society should thus be an essential component of poverty reduction strategies.

53. Clearly, such targeted policies and programmes will need to be implemented on a sufficiently large scale and sustained over a long period of time to have a substantial impact on endemic poverty. Furthermore, every policy and programme has a cost. A major mobilization effort will thus be needed to generate the resources required to carry out a successful assault on poverty. Policy makers will need to re-examine national priorities so that the poor are regarded as being among the first of those priorities. In practical terms, this means that the balance of resource allocation will need to shift in favour of the poor. Could this be brought about without generating new frictions and tensions in the society concerned? Could a national social compact or partnership for development be devised that is perceived as a positive-sum game by privileged and poor alike? Can the uplift of the poor be seen by the privileged as being in their own interest as well? These are some of the questions that call for attention in the preparations for the Summit.

54. However, given the massive and entrenched character of poverty, even a major shift in resources is not likely to be sufficient to address this issue in full measure. For a truly successful effort to reduce poverty, new resources must be generated at the local community, national and international levels. At the local level, innovative and creative approaches must be developed to marshall the energies and skills of the poor through community-based programmes and projects. Non-governmental agents of development can play a critical part in this regard. At the national level, higher rates of growth, savings and capital formation need to be attained to generate resources for poverty

reduction. The question to be asked in this context is: What is a socially necessary rate of growth and how can it be achieved and sustained by all countries? This is a dimension that must be addressed in the preparations for the Summit.

55. There is also the factor of international solidarity to consider. How can a concomitant mobilization of and shift in resources be carried out at the global level to support national policies for poverty reduction and social development? Can a social compact be envisaged at the international level that expresses solidarity among all members of the world community? Together, the answers to these questions will determine the outcome of the Summit.

C. Expansion of productive employment

56. In Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, under the heading "International economic and social cooperation", it is stated that the United Nations shall promote, inter alia, full employment. This objective is further elaborated in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Employment Policy Convention (No. 122) of 1964 which provides that members shall "declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment".

57. In the past decade or so, unemployment has increased rather than receded in practically all groups of countries. At the beginning of the 1990s, and not including the rural sector, at least 70 million people were estimated to be unemployed in developing countries, about 28 million in developed countries and 7.5 million in countries with economies in transition. In the short term at least, the stabilization and adjustment policies pursued by developing countries in the past few years have tended to accentuate unemployment. Unemployment rates have doubled to around 8 per cent in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and the transition economies are experiencing a massive increase in the number of unemployed. 5/

58. The figures do not, however, capture the full scale of the problem. They do not cover rural unemployment or underemployment nor do they cover the large and growing informal sector. The informal sector is estimated to absorb over 60 per cent of urban labour force in sub-Saharan Africa, 50-75 per cent in some countries in South Asia, and 10-20 per cent in the newly industrialized countries in East and South-East Asia. 6/ In some countries of Latin America, there has been some improvement in the overall employment situation as a result of economic recovery.

59. It will then be necessary to account for the generally unsatisfactory employment situation in the world, and for the significant differences between countries and regions. To a large extent, this can of course be attributed to the economic performance of different countries, to the generally sluggish state of the world economy, and to the frequently tough fiscal and monetary measures adopted to deal with balance-of-payments problems and to combat inflation; but employment problems cannot be explained only by a slow growth of output. By having different effects on, for instance, the structure of investment, the types of economic policies followed can influence the pattern and growth of employment independently of their effects on output growth. Moreover, there are numerous other factors that affect both the supply and the demand sides of the

labour market, that affect the nature, structure, productivity, remuneration and quality of employment, as well as its total volume, and that make some groups particularly vulnerable in the labour market. Demographic trends affect the total growth of the labour force, but also its distribution including rural-urban and international migration. The availability of appropriate education and training has an obvious influence over the ability of individuals to compete in the labour market. Technological change profoundly affects the demand for labour and the structure of employment. Social and cultural factors are among those that influence the growth of entrepreneurship, as well as the participation of women in the labour force and their status in employment. The legal and institutional environment can either encourage or discourage the growth of enterprises and employment. The distribution of assets, such as land, is another factor affecting the search for, as well as the quality and productivity of, employment.

60. The complex interaction of these and other factors would need to be analysed in the preparatory process for the Summit and at the Summit itself. Such an assessment would have to take as its starting-point the impact of global economic trends on the employment situation and the labour markets of different regions or groups of countries, but would also suggest how domestic policies and other factors in different regions or groups of countries have either aggravated or alleviated the impact on employment of the international economic environment.

61. In the light of this analysis, some major policy issues could be raised for discussion.

62. Sustained, non-inflationary growth is obviously a first requirement for the generation of employment. This implies not only a sound macroeconomic policy framework, but also the need for structural adjustment and economic reforms to contend with the changing economic environment. The question to be addressed is to what extent it is possible to build into such reform policies and programmes provision for sustainable job creation, and protection for those whose jobs are eliminated. Is it possible and desirable to reconcile the objectives of monetary stability and full employment through policies designed to influence the growth of wages and other forms of income, and what implications does this have for industrial relations systems and free collective bargaining?

63. However, experience has shown that economic growth and improvements in economic efficiency, while essential, do not suffice to create enough employment for the entire labour force. The phenomenon of "jobless growth" has existed in many parts of the world. In recent years, it has been on the rise in all groups of countries except for a few countries in East Asia. 7/ It has been observed in the past that in developing countries high growth rates can coexist with high levels of unemployment and underemployment. Today similar problems are confronting industrially advanced countries. As they emerge from the recession, it is by no means certain that employment will grow at the same rate as the economy. In the past job losses in the manufacturing sector were offset by gains in the service sector including the public sector; but this may be less true in the future, in so far as technological and structural changes in the service sector could make it a less promising source of employment. The challenge facing virtually all countries is therefore how to make growth more employment-intensive, and this in turn raises questions concerning the

distribution of investment, the level and nature of skills and the functioning of the labour market.

64. In practically all countries, whatever their level of development, the greatest scope for the expansion of employment may lie in the growth of small enterprises and micro-enterprises, including self-employment, in rural and urban areas. However, small enterprises have great difficulty in surviving, and policies need to be devised to improve their survival prospects, for instance by improving their access to capital, credit, technology, markets and supporting services, and by enhancing management skills. In all these respects they tended to have been disadvantaged in the past. The development of an adequate physical infrastructure is also a key requirement for rural and urban development, and for the growth of industrial and agricultural enterprises and hence of employment. Well-designed labour-intensive public works programmes can therefore play an important role not only in creating short-term employment but also in providing a basis for the longer-term growth of productive employment.

65. Global markets for goods and services - including, though to a much smaller extent, the labour markets - are becoming increasingly integrated. In the face of competition, firms in certain industries are moving their operations to countries with lower labour costs. Such a redistribution of industry is widely regarded as a positive development. First, it requires adjustment in the industrially advanced countries and it also increases protectionist pressures in such countries. The challenge in those countries is therefore to maintain and strengthen open trading relationships and capital flows, while at the same time assisting industries, firms and workers to adjust to a changing environment.

66. Second, certain regions, particularly Africa and those of the least developed countries, and large parts of the world's population are being marginalized, since they are unable to compete in this process. Although the impact of integration of capital markets on employment is not clear, some of these global imbalances are leading to new patterns of international migration for employment, as well as a growth of illegal migration under highly exploitative conditions. Enhanced international cooperation may be called for to regulate migratory flows and to protect migrant workers, but another aim of international cooperation would be to reduce pressures for emigration by taking work to the workers, that is, by investing in job creation in countries losing people through emigration.

67. The quality of a country's human resources is now recognized as being a determining factor in that country's economic and social progress and in its ability to adjust to a changing environment. All too often this important fact has been lost sight of when decisions are taken concerning the allocation of resources. Education and training thus need to be given a central place in development. In many countries, this implies a significant reordering of development priorities; but it is a question not only of the quantity, but also of the type of education and training provided. A widespread phenomenon among the educated unemployed is the existence of skills and aptitudes that do not match the requirements of the labour market. There is an urgent need in virtually all countries not only to allocate higher resources to education but also to review education and training programmes so as to bring them into closer contact with the world of work and to develop schemes that will enable workers to adapt to changing labour market requirements.

68. At the same time, it has to be recognized that unemployment may also to some extent be due to segmented and inflexible labour markets. Labour is not always allocated among sectors, enterprises and occupations in such a way as to maximize both output and income, and by services that facilitate the job search, occupational choices and mobility between jobs. Labour markets need to operate not only efficiently and flexibly but also equitably, that is, without discrimination against disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

69. The main employment problem in many countries is not open unemployment, but rather precarious, low-productivity and low-income employment, in which workers are deprived of any form of social protection beyond that provided by their families or sometimes by local communities. In most developing countries, the workers engaged in regular, stable employment with adequate working conditions and social protection represent only a very small proportion of the labour force. Even in the advanced countries which have highly developed official systems of social protection, there is increasing recourse to casual, temporary or part-time forms of employment. To some extent, such a trend may be the result of a personal choice by workers who prefer these more flexible forms of employment, but to a large extent it is also due to changing attitudes of enterprises towards their labour force. The key issue to be considered here is the trade-off between the quality and the quantity of employment. To what extent is the provision of social protection and other measures to protect workers against exploitation a deterrent to an expansion of employment? Furthermore, to what extent is it possible to bring workers in the rural and informal sectors within the ambit of the regulations and institutions of modern society without depriving them of their only source of income, however precarious?

70. Among the issues to be considered is the role of the State in the functioning of the market. Even though the State cannot alone guarantee full, productive, freely chosen and high-quality employment, it must create the macroeconomic conditions that favour the growth of productive jobs and investment, develop policies that stimulate enterprise and job creation, provide services for education, training, and health that improve the quality of human resources, ensure adequate social protection, and develop a legislative and institutional framework to regulate, and ensure the smooth functioning of, the labour market. However, it is also important that the growth of representative organizations capable of speaking in the name of the main actors in the labour market, and the development of a social dialogue among them, be encouraged. The development of a dialogue among all the productive forces of society and of harmonious systems of industrial relations based on cooperation rather than confrontation can be of primary importance for the creation of a climate conducive to the growth of productive, high-quality employment.

IV. ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

71. A basic objective of the United Nations system and its agencies and programmes, from their inception, has been to improve the lives and social conditions of all members of societies, in particular through facilitating cooperation among Governments and peoples. Even a cursory glance at information on social goals and targets and the principal activities being carried out particularly in relation to the three core issues to be considered at the World Summit for Social Development would show how vast is the involvement of the

United Nations system in the social sphere. (See also the additional information on activities of organizations of the United Nations system.)

72. The basic objective has remained in essence unchanged over the years, even as the notion of what constitutes the good society has undergone change and, more profoundly, the means and methods by which such a society should be promoted have evolved. Perhaps the most notable change in attitudes is reflected in the waning of interest in ideology and a marked preference for pragmatism. In the area of social policy, the trend has been towards the notion of the State more as enabler or facilitator and less as provider. Creative ways are also being sought to link the social functions of the State and the market response to social demands. However, societies are also being profoundly affected by technological change and the communications revolution. The implications of these changes for social policy at the national and international levels have yet to be explored fully.

73. The task before the United Nations system is to respond to these changes in an effective and unified manner. To a certain extent, this has been happening. An intensive process of reform has been under way in most organizations both at the intergovernmental and secretariat levels to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of their activities. At the central level, the role of the Economic and Social Council is being revitalized and its coordination functions vis-à-vis the system are being strengthened. The newly established Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to address, as an integral component of sustainability, the combating of the problem of poverty. Pursuant to the Cartagena Commitment, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has the mandate to examine poverty issues in relation to national and international policies for trade and development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has placed high priority on human resource development in its fifth cycle. The World Bank is focusing its assistance on reducing poverty. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is paying increasing attention to the social dimension of stabilization and adjustment programmes. The principal focus of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is on social and rural development and poverty reduction. ILO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are concerned with various aspects of employment, health, education and training. The human and social dimensions are being given increasing attention in the programmes of the regional commissions as well.

74. Questions are often raised, however, about the fragmented character of these activities and the apparent difficulty of bringing about greater coherence and effectiveness to work of the United Nations system. Concern is also expressed about the capacity of the system to adjust to a rapidly changing environment. There is a strong call from Member States for closer coordination and a united thrust in the multifaceted activities of the system.

75. The preparatory process for the Summit and its follow-up can be used to achieve a new unity of purpose in the social sphere in much the same way as the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its follow-up have generated a more unified approach to sustainable

development. It can be used to refocus the system's activities on the basis of more clearly defined priorities, and can also help forge stronger linkages among its various components - funds, programmes, technical agencies, financial institutions and regional commissions - around common goals and strategies in order to concentrate scarce financial and technical resources. The preparatory process can also enable the United Nations system to play its catalytic role in bringing together the many actors concerned - Governments, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and community groups - for the purpose of achieving synergy and maximum impact.

76. The first step in achieving such a united thrust is to secure a common understanding of issues and develop unifying themes, and this implies a move away from a sectoral approach to social and economic issues to an integrated one. In addition, greater attention needs to be paid to the respective roles of government, the market and civil society. The United Nations system can promote a better understanding of the interactions among these entities so that countries can develop social policies that strike an appropriate balance among them.

77. That development is an integral process comprising economic, social and human dimensions is now explicitly recognized. However, there is need for a greater appreciation of the vital importance of institutions and of the social and cultural context in which policies and programmes are formulated and carried out. Their success, or effectiveness, will rely in part on an appreciation of such social factors. A significant step forward would be the extension of the notion of "social", beyond its narrow definition covering either the social sector or social welfare interventions, to also include the notion of "society". It should be recognized that a proper object of concern for social policy is the impact of political, economic and social decisions on each and every member of society, as well as the best means to promote opportunities for people and to enable their participation in decision-making.

78. The United Nations system can make a significant contribution to social development through the extension, in a coordinated manner, of its support for national efforts beyond the providing of direct assistance in the implementation of specific social programmes to the building up of national capacity for social analysis and policy design as well as to institutional development covering all areas of national life. The United Nations system is well placed to support national efforts through development of standards and norms, monitoring of trends, and evaluation of particular policies, as well as collection and dissemination of information and of assessments of future trends. The principal challenge in this area will be to make analysis and information as well as policy support and technical assistance available in a form and manner that can be readily utilized. The combined output of the system is vast: how to deliver more effectively relevant information and assistance to those who need such information and assistance and how to keep them aware and informed of what is available are the major immediate tasks - and those tasks would be greatly facilitated by still closer collaboration within the system.

79. For the United Nations system, clearly one task will remain paramount: to encourage and support international cooperation wherever necessary and desirable. In this context, two considerations may be emphasized. Increased globalization of issues, including specifically social issues, and the transborder nature of an increasing number of problems have made international

cooperation in many areas a necessity. The challenge for the United Nations system is to support, whenever appropriate, multilateral forms of cooperation within clear guidelines. The use of multilateral mechanisms needs to be encouraged so that the interests of all countries may find expression and can be harmonized. Second, apart from the issues that are already in the international agenda, international cooperation must encompass new and emerging issues that confront the international community.

80. International goals, guidelines and standards covering a large range of issues have been elaborated and agreed in the various forums of the United Nations; however, even when they have been agreed and formally accepted by countries, adherence to those goals and guidelines is sometimes uneven. Countries may interpret provisions differently, or have different possibilities for fulfilling certain undertakings. Such questions arise with particular starkness in the social sphere, where the force of different cultural traditions and of different conceptions of the good society is most keenly felt. The United Nations system still needs to confront a range of questions relating to the notion of unity in diversity. In other words, it needs to consider how to improve the process by which one can identify basic common human concerns - where adherence to common norms appears appropriate - while encouraging pluralism and diversity in other respects, so that all may benefit. The Summit would be a unique forum for harmonizing these often competing concerns.

V. OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT

81. As the analysis in sections III and IV suggests, the three core issues clearly involve common areas of policy actions like the revival of the growth process, affirmative action for the poor, empowerment of marginal and disadvantaged groups, targeted employment generation, human resource development, labour market reforms, social security and democratization. They also require a common set of reorientations in international cooperation including the role of the United Nations system. The challenge before the preparatory process for the Summit is to spell out those reorientations in terms of coherent programmes linked together by a unifying theme so that a united thrust towards social progress can be achieved.

82. The preparatory process for the Summit should serve as a mobilizing factor for a whole range of actions in the social field at the local, national and international levels. Moreover, the Summit should be seen not as the end but as the start of a process that should yield practical benefits in terms of according a higher priority to the social dimension of development and reshaping national and international policies in the light of the new priorities.

83. The convening of the Summit will coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Summit will take place following the end of the cold war and close to the dawn of a new century. This will also be the first occasion when issues of social development will be addressed collectively by world leaders at the highest political level. Moreover, a number of factors make it a propitious moment for global action. Sterile ideological confrontation exists no more; the world has accumulated important lessons from half a century of development experience and human beings are increasingly being seen as a central focus of development. Furthermore, accelerating technological

processes are creating not only a more open economic space but also a new logic for policy coordination at the global level.

84. The issues to be considered by the Summit are no less important. Efforts to achieve higher levels of productive employment, a reduction of poverty and greater social integration are vital to achieving social peace and stability, without which economic progress and peace and security are not possible. As was stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/277-S/24111) pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping", and reaffirmed recently by the Security Council at a meeting held on 30 April 1993 (see document S/25696), social peace is as important as strategic and political peace.

85. On account both of its timing and of the issues to be addressed, the World Summit for Social Development should be a landmark in the quest for a more peaceful, prosperous and equitable world. It is important and legitimate at the outset of the preparatory process to set very ambitious objectives for the Summit. The Summit should leave a mark on social-policy making and on international cooperation for social development, in some ways comparable with that left by the Atlantic Charter, which in 1941 laid the basis for international cooperation in the economic and social fields through the United Nations system in the post-war world. The Atlantic Charter, among other things, gave universal expression to the concept of social security for all, which has profoundly influenced social policy ever since. The World Summit for Social Development should likewise set the objectives and framework for social policy in the post-cold war world; but social policy has to be thought of in terms not just of social protection and safety nets but also of a development policy that integrates poverty alleviation, employment generation and social integration into the mainstream of economic and political decision-making.

86. It was suggested earlier that a central unifying theme of the Summit could be the promotion of solidarity within and between countries for the purpose of combating deprivation and exclusion. Thus a possible outcome of the Summit could be an international compact for social development. Such a compact would be based on a recognition by the nations of the world that all have a common interest in each other's social progress and social stability - that is to say, on an acknowledgement both of the global dimensions of social problems in a world characterized by increasing interdependence but also by increasing competitiveness, and of the global trends that affect the attainment of social objectives.

Notes

1/ 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.IV.2), chap. VII, sect. A.

2/ Ibid., chap. I, sect. C (1).

3/ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.I.8), resolution 1, annex II.

4/ World Bank, World Development Report, 1992: Development and the Environment (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 29-30.

5/ Data are not strictly comparable owing to differences in methodologies and definitions of unemployment. Unemployment figures for the developed market economies are from World Economic Survey, 1993 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.II.C.1), forthcoming; figures for Eastern Europe and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are from Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Survey of Europe in 1992-1993 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.II.E.1), and refer to the situation at the end of 1992. Developing countries unemployment data refer to 1990: see Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1991 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.II.F.4); R. Infante and E. Klein, "The Latin American labour market: 1950-1990", CEPAL Review, No. 45 (December 1991), pp. 121-135; and International Labour Organisation, World Labour Report, 1993 (Geneva, ILO, 1993).

6/ See 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.IV.2), chap. IV, sect. A (3).

7/ For a more detailed analysis of this issue, see United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report, 1993 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 35-39.